The Writing of Thomas Carlyle's 'Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches'

by

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1984

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I affirm this thesis is my own work.

1984

Acknowledgements

It is well known Cromwell saw the hand of God in daily events and frequently sought His counsel through prayer. Carlyle himself saw God manifested in nature and in the men and women he called heroes. I hope, therefore, I will not be judged heretical in thanking God by acknowledging the invaluable help of my heroic friends, family and teachers, and by adding that were it not for them, the thesis would never have been started, let alone completed.

First of all I wish to thank my personal supervisor Professor K. J. Fielding, who with a thorough and thoughtful patience that is the hallmark of all his work, responded to a letter from a prospective postgraduate in 1980, encouraged him to come to Edinburgh, and advised, counseled and guided him along the straight and narrow path of scholarship. Among the other Carlyleans who have at one time or another assisted me here in Edinburgh and elsewhere are Ian Campbell, Aileen Christiansen, Rodger Tarr and G. B. Tennyson.

All these people might have remained only names to me had I not in my first year at University been assigned to read the incomprehensible Sartor Resartus. Professor Bernard Kogan, a rare teacher who enjoys challenging his students, is responsible for that. The book was a struggle, but for many reasons I found myself continually referring to it and soon began to investigate other works of Carlyle's. This was encouraged not only by Dr. Kogan but also by Dean Nancy Cirillo, who more than any other teacher helped me to read critically and think with some precision. The concern and interest of these two friends in my studies, ideas, plans for the future -- in short, in me personally -- is a great source of pride and satisfaction.

Yet even they might have remained unknown were it not for the encouragement and love of my parents. They placed a high value on education yet gave the necessary freedom needed to make an independent choice. Their support has been unwavering and constant. To them, and the rest of my family I wish to dedicate this work.

In my catalogue of friends there are two people who stand out as exemplars of grace, refinement, intelligence and wit. From my boyhood onwards Ruth and Al Dreier have been mentors. Modest and self-effacing, they nonetheless fired my imagination from an early age with stories of their literal and metaphorical travels and instilled in me to no small extent their curiosity and interest in things in general. To them and to many other friends who supported me with their letters, visits and words of encouragement, I am indebted.

Finally, I would be remiss did I not offer a "thank you" to the staffs of the English Department here at Edinburgh and of the many libraries I have used in America, England and Scotland; to the British government and the University of Edinburgh for the financial support that made possible my tenure at Edinburgh; and not least to Carlyle himself, who even when foolish is interesting, and whose writings have in many ways, sustained me so many years.

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Chapter I

Discovering Cromwell

Talk often flows freely and inaccurately about Carlyle the literary critic, Carlyle the social critic and even Carlyle the husband. Studies treating various aspects of Sartor Resartus, Past and Present, and On Heroes appear with some frequency. But mention Carlyle the historian and uneasy silence ensues. Literary scholars do not claim this Carlyle; modern historians will not claim him. All in all the less said about this Carlyle the better, because most people are convinced there is little to be said. Yet Carlyle considered himself an historian. He spent the better part of four years on the French Revolution, parts of seven on Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches, and twelve years on Frederick the Great. He also wrote numerous historical and biographical essays. Yet the notice taken of these writings has been slight. G.B. Tennyson's critical review of the corpus of Carlyle scholarship notes that none of Carlyle's full-length histories have received thorough scholarly attention.[1]

The chestnuts regarding Carlyle the historian have been roasting since his work appeared. His prose can be abstruse and contrived. His approach to history is anti-modern. He is occasionally inaccurate. While these objections have some validity, that is all that can be said for them. The likes of Mill, Thackeray, Emerson, Froude and many others have voiced objections to Carlyle's histories, but have still found the merits to vastly outweigh the defects.[2] These people were sensible, however

disparate their views and outlooks. Yet they all found surpassing worth in Carlyle's histories, while modern readers are thought sensible for avoiding them.

The purpose here is not to inquire why this is so, except insofar as to echo Morse Peckham's contention that heroic texts require heroic readers, that, in short, our own defects as readers are certainly more glaring than any defects in Carlyle as a writer. My purpose, rather, is to contribute a modest addition to the small body of scholarship dealing with Carlyle the historian.

The work to be studied is Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches: with Elucidations. Included in this study will be a chronology of the period of reading and research for Cromwell and its actual writing. Carlyle's method in his research and writing, his use of sources, and the thought on history he brought to his treatment of Cromwell will also be examined. An attempt to view Cromwell in the climate in which it was written and to assess its effect on its own and subsequent times will also be made, and the book's enduring scholarly, literary, and historic value will be estimated. Manuscript sources for such a study abound. Carlyle's letters, the manuscript of the historical and biographical writings later published as the Historical Sketches, and a large mass of reading notes and rough drafts will all be examined.[3]

At the outset, however, a preliminary account of the writing of Cromwell is needed, both in order to more clearly understand the work itself, and because no accurate one exists. In looking at previous accounts of this period in Carlyle's life found in the full-length biographies of James Anthony Froude and David Alec Wilson and Fred Kaplan[4] we find they are often wrong, occasionally

evasive, and always incomplete. There is a need for a new account of what happened simply as a biographical study. Aside from setting the record straight this account will also offer the chance to see how Carlyle actually made his attempts to write on Cromwell, which knowledge is necessary for a critical understanding of the book.

* * * * * * *

In November 1845 Thomas Carlyle's latest historical effort was published as a two volume edition of Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches: with Elucidations. Carlyle's main contribution to the work, as the title modestly suggests, was as the collector, editor and elucidator of Oliver's "authentic utterances" presented "in natural sequence . . . to ingenuous readers."[5] Study of Carlyle's letters and papers reveals that the work in its present form was conceived and completed in about eighteen months -- from January of 1844 through to late August 1845. However, study of the Civil Wars, Cromwell and the Commonwealth occupied Carlyle twice over a twenty-five year period of time, while his revisions to the completed work continued until 1869. In 1822 Carlyle had briefly contemplated an essay on the Commonwealth, but dropped the topic before he had written anything for publication, or read extensively in the history of the era.[6] His later association with this subject was much more long-lived and frequently interrupted. During the seven years prior to the publication of Cromwell Carlyle's attempts at serious and concentrated study of the first half of the seventeenth century were often hampered or interrupted by other articles, lectures, and books, family crises and public commitments, and his own uncertainty and indecision over his

chosen topic for research.

Indeed, this period prior to the book's publication was one of the most fruitful ever for Carlyle as a writer, far from merely being a prelude of preparation for Cromwell. In December 1839, there appeared Chartism; in May 1840 his lectures on hero-worship were delivered, and then expanded as they were written out during the summer; finally, Past and Present was written with great speed from October 1842, to March 1843. Among Carlyle's finest works this book was conceived out of frustrated concern and anger at unjust social conditions, and inspired by a timely visit to the ruined abbey of Bury St. Edmunds, and the reading of Jocelin's Chronica Jocelini de Brakelonda.

When not occupied with these works or the several articles he wrote in this period Carlyle was often attempting to read about or write something on the early Stuarts, the Civil Wars and the Commonwealth, or Cromwell -- he was a long time in finally deciding exactly what his subject was. Carlyle's letters of the period both mirror his indecision in deciding on a specific topic, and exaggerate and distort like a circus mirror his frustration at making intelligible and meaningful for "ingenuous readers" a period in English history he had come to believe grossly misunderstood. Yet through all the interruptions, all the complaining and lamentation, the subject was never dropped. Why, if Cromwell caused so much anguish, did Carlyle persist? Sidestepping the question for the moment, except to say that Carlyle never liked to admit defeat and was perpetually complaining about almost everything, we can note that once he made his decision to compile Cromwell's letters and speeches, his work went much more swiftly

while being viewed somewhat less mournfully. The present intention is to document this most intensive period of research and writing; to show what Carlyle was doing and thinking and, as far as is possible, when. Yet before doing this it may be useful to consider briefly Carlyle's earlier brush with the history of the Commonwealth.

He first seriously considered writing about the Commonwealth early in 1822, though examination of records of his early reading shows that he was only slightly acquainted with its history. While his University and later reading was wide-ranging, there is little indication from it of the dominant role history generally and particularly that of the Civil Wars would come to have in his life. Still, such books as Hume's History of England and Millar's Historical View of the English Government were known by Carlyle.[7] He knew enough of Clarendon's History of the Rebellion to recommend it to William Graham in April, 1821, to whom he also maintained that "improvement and enjoyment" were to be gained from history "by every man of sense."[8]

This general interest in history was specifically channeled to works concerning the Commonwealth in March 1822, when Carlyle began keeping a notebook or journal of his Civil War and related reading.[9] At the same time, when writing to his friends and family, Carlyle maintained he needed to write some book of his own, and that he would do so if only a subject could be chosen, almost as if once a topic were seized the book would write itself! A projected essay on Milton's genius led him to that poet's works, to Ludlow's Memoirs, and again to Clarendon.[10] Yet the poet proved "not quite the subject I should like."[11] By 27 April the topic, he wrote to his brother Alexander, was fixed:

> My purpose (but this only among yourselves!) is to come out with a kind of Essay on the Civil Wars, the Commonwealth of England -- not to write a history of them -- but to exhibit if I can some features of the national character as it was then displayed, supporting my remarks by mental portraits, drawn with my best ability, of Cromwell, Laud, Geo: Fox, Milton, Hyde &c the most distinguished of the actors in this great scene.[12]

Three days later, writing to James Johnstone, a friend from University days, Carlyle notes he is reading a biography of Cromwell, then confides "I am fermenting some villainous cookery about the 'Commonwealth-times' which in due season I hope to make the nation drink of."[13] Unfortunately, the "villainous cookery" was soon placed on the back burner. His next reference to the topic on 27 May as "still in embryo, but not yet abandoned," is really inaccurate since by this time the essay on the Commonwealth was being superseded by Carlyle's translation work and his tuition of the Buller children.[14] He had not yet leisure to write his own work. By Autumn, 1822 Carlyle admitted as much to Jane, when he spoke regretfully of his abandoned topic. In language prophetic of the long struggle to come once he had recommenced his studies of the period he wrote on 28 October "I contemplate with terror the long train of preparation, and the poorness of the result."[15]

Although the Commonwealth did not long hold Carlyle's active interest he did take rather extensive notes on his reading for this projected essay. His observations come in several entries written between 23 March and 15 April 1822, in what came to be called his "Note Books." While many entries found later in this volume take the form of epigrams and observations on life and society, most of the entries related to the Civil Wars appear to be notes taken while reading, often complete with the page numbers

of the texts he was reading. Throughout all the writings Carlyle's attempt to become familiar with his subject is evident. He is beginning to put events in their proper chronological order and historical perspective, to assess accurately the individual characters he intended to portray, and pass judgment on the books he had read.

Carlyle writes:

> Oliver Cromwell's remark to Ld. Falkland touching the "Remonstrance" or declaration of grievances voted & printed by the Pt. -- about the date of King's return from Scotland. Oliver said "they would have a sorry debate" -- the thing being so plain; and next day when the debate was done and not sorrily -- he said, if the question had failed "he wd. have sold his all next morning, and never seen Engd. more" -- so near (quoth Clarendon) was the poor Kingdom to its deliverance (247).[16]

A description of Charles I after his army's defeat at Naseby goes a long way toward delineating that unfortunate monarch's vacillating, hesitantly indecisive character:

> After the loss of Naseby every thing with Charles went to wreck & ruin. Sir Dick Greenvil the Nabal, and Goring the dog kept quarrelling & sparring with all men; there was nothing but agitation confusion, mis-rule & despondency. So that in fine C. retired to Chepstow, thence to Cardiff -- thence to various other places -- wandering about with a purpose ever-changing, a hope ever-declining -- his own servants, even his own nephews, rebelling against him, till nearly all had "forsook" him & fled.[17]

Carlyle also duly noted what he was reading, often commenting on the text in general terms. Ludlow in his Memoirs; for example, "describes with a ready a modest & a graphic pencil." More a man of principle than Clarendon Carlyle admired "Ludlow's patient unaffected calmness very highly."[18] The first part of "Milton's

history of Britain" was "very beautiful," if also "unphilosophically composed" of "ugly whinstones, numberless, shapeless."[19] The impression given by these notes and commentary is of someone initially groping with a subject, not thoroughly conversant with the key figures, events, or issues.

This impression is strengthened by Carlyle's view of Cromwell in the Note Books compared with the one he would later develop:

> Cromwell and the rest look much like a pack of fanatical knaves -- a compound of religious enthusiasm, and of barbarous selfishness; which made them stick at no means for gratifying the one and the other. Cromwell is a very curious person. Has his character been rightly seized yet? [20]

Carlyle later asked himself what it was that Cromwell, Milton and others "aimed at so intensely,"[21] having not yet hit upon the Puritan General's piety and sincerity. With all his inquiry after the "real" Cromwell Carlyle was not to discover him for almost two decades. In late 1826, with thoughts of the Commonwealth far from the newly-wedded author's mind, he permitted himself the observation that a biography of Cromwell would be a "fine thing." Imagine, he wrote, a delineation of "The wily fanatic himself, in his own most singular features, at once a hero and a blackguard pettifogging scrub; and the wild image of his Times reflected from his accompaniment!"[22]

In the next decade Carlyle's formal writing dealt largely with literary and social criticism and the French Revolution. A project on Cromwell was out of sight, but occasional references to Commonwealth figures indicate it was not entirely out of mind. In Carlyle's unfinished novel, Wotton Reinfred, written between January

and August, 1827,[23] a portrait of Cromwell serves as a basis for a brief discussion of his character. Edmund Walter, Wotton's rival for the affections of Jane Montagu, describes Cromwell in highly ambiguous terms:

> This is the man whose words no one could interpret, but whose thoughts were clearest wisdom, who spoke in laborious folly, in voluntary or involuntary enigma, but saw and acted unerringly as fate. Confusion, ineptitude, dishonesty are pictured on his countenance, but through these shines a fiery strength, nay, a grandeur, as of a true hero. You will see that he was fearless . . . yet cunning and double withal, like some paltry pettifogger. He is your true enthusiastic hypocrite; at once crackbrained and inspired; a knave and a demigod; in brief, old Noll as he looked and lived![24]

Wotton, whom one would suspect of more accurately representing Carlyle's views, declares he is "for the falcon," meaning Cromwell, as opposed to the "ringdove" Charles, but then the matter is dropped in favor of more philosophical discussions.[25]

Yet a more specific reference on Carlyle's part to Cromwell in a letter (4 March 1831) to his brother John is not at all ambiguous about Cromwell's character, and is not at all favorable. Discussing the Whig ministry's chances of survival Carlyle asserted only Brougham would endure. "I should wonder little," Carlyle added, "to see /‾Brougham_/ one day a second Cromwell: he is the cunningest and strongest man now in England, as I construe him," with principles no better than Napoleon's, and "a worship and self-devotion to Power."[26] Although not a comment specifically on Cromwell, it does show that Carlyle was still swayed by the current historical wisdom concerning him, that his hypocrisy, mendacity and ambition left him unredeemed.

Other references to the Commonwealth, oblique or explicit, provide those gifted with hindsight a set of stepping stones to the subject of the Civil Wars and the prominence of Cromwell. Already in the essay "Signs of the Times" Carlyle rejected "Profit and Loss" as the great motivator of men, claiming instead that men were roused "for some infinite and invisible" end. He continues "Our English Revolution too originated in Religion. Men did battle, in those old days, not for Purse-sake, but for Conscience-sake."[27] Here already is Carlyle's miniature justification of the Puritan revolt. In another and final example, although more could be offered, Carlyle specifically refers to Cromwell. What is said is more a comment on his reviving reputation among Englishmen than a favorable assessment of his character, but it does show Carlyle was aware of current feeling. In the essay on "Mirabeau" he writes "Nay, Old Noll, whose bones were dug-up and hung in chains . . . as the just emblem of himself and his deserts, the offal of creation at that time, -- has not he too got to be a very respectable grim bronze-figure, . . . of whom England seems proud rather than otherwise?"[28]

Carlyle did change his mind, and did so publicly in his course of lectures on "Revolutions in Modern Europe" in May 1839. Before this occurred there was a great deal of reading, studying, and some preliminary writing on the Commonwealth unrelated to the lectures. And before this began there was a rekindling of Carlyle's overt interest in Cromwell. It is interesting exactly how the match that lit the kindling was struck; and it is important because it led to Carlyle's starting the research that led to Cromwell. The traditional story has it that either John Stuart Mill or John Robertson suggested Cromwell as an essay subject to Carlyle. He accepted, but was rudely

informed by Robertson, acting as editor of the London and Westminster Review in Mill's absence, that he wanted to write the article himself. A furious Carlyle then broke off relations with the Review, deciding to continue on his own with the subject.[29] The account so simply stated leaves several unanswered questions. Why did Carlyle break off with the Review over this incident? Why did he not insist on doing the article after Robertson's curt usurpation? And why did Carlyle then continue with the subject on his own? A close examination of this affair goes some way to explaining Carlyle's curious reaction.

Since the completion of The French Revolution in early 1837 he had been engaged in no large topic, nor was there any in view. His first two courses of lectures dealing with German literature and the history of literature, though personally agitating, did not involve extensive preparation. A brief glance at his reviews of German authors in the twenties, and at his multifarious reading during his University days and after indicates the depth of his knowledge.[30] Articles related to his work on the French Revolution appeared in 1837, while an article on Sir Walter Scott appeared later that year, as did, of course, The French Revolution itself.[31]

In 1838, Sartor Resartus was first published in book form in England, having appeared serially earlier in Fraser's, and been published in 1836 in America.[32] Carlyle's essays were collected and published as the Miscellanies this year as well, with Carlyle spending some time revising them. During this period he took two long vacations at Scotsbrig, the second of which came in the summer of 1838 and lasted eight weeks.[33] On the whole, he was relaxing while allowing his energy to build up again. He wrote to John on 27 July that he was confronted with proofs, dull reading, and "a series of dinner

work and racketting," and concluded "I have done nothing else whatever that I could help, except live."[34] Though somewhat adrift and inactive, he acceded to the request of John Robertson for "something for the October Number" of the Review, and produced the slight essay "Varnhagen von Ense's Memoirs."[35] On 15 November he wrote to Emerson "I do feel sometimes as if another book were growing in me, -- tho' I almost tremble to think of it. Not for this winter, O no! I will write an Article merely, or some such thing, and read trash if better be not."[36] To his mother on 28 November Carlyle still spoke vaguely about "Some 'Article,' I suppose," but had nothing specific in mind.[37]

Both Robertson and Mill, according to Carlyle's report of the matter,[38] continued to press him for articles. A letter of 2 October from Mill to Robertson said "If Carlyle cannot take to either of the subjects we had in view for him we must be thankful for anything he can take to."[39] The letter to Emerson mentioned above (15 Nov. 1838) finds Carlyle mentioning that Robertson, "a goodnatured admiring swan-goose" was pressing him for contributions.[40] It was probably early in December that Robertson suggested the subject of Cromwell to Carlyle, while Mill was also consulted. The subject of Cromwell being broached, Carlyle seems to have been less than enthusiastic about writing on it, referring to a "kind of reluctant purpose to do an essay on Oliver Cromwell."[41] Nonetheless, he accepted, set about gathering materials and even went to the British Museum to read some books. But Robertson's approval of this subject for Carlyle was "of the fainter kind," and in fact was withdrawn a few days after it had been granted. Robertson wrote Carlyle, enclosed payment for the article on Varnhagen von Ense, and told him "that he, with a

thousand apologies, will do the Cromwell himself!" In a white fury Carlyle wrote in reply, as he told John, "Do for God's sake, and let me hear no more of you," then continued to vent his anger ~~on~~ to his brother:

> I cannot but rejoice that a noisy blockhead of this kind is not to waste my patience any more, but is sent off, and without éclat. Have nothing to do with fools; they are the fatal species. Nay Robertson withal is "fifteen years younger" than I; to be "edited" by him, and by Mill, and the Benthamee formula -- O Heavens it is worse than Algiers and Negro Guiana; nothing short of death could drive a white man to it.[42]

It is curious that this tirade is directed not merely at Robertson -- the immediate cause of Carlyle's anger -- but at the periodical itself, its philosophy, and its proprietor. Carlyle's dislike of Bentham and Utilitarianism is well-known. No doubt he felt a pang of conscience whenever his work appeared in Mill's Review. But there was a more practical basis for his anger, since his treatment by the Review in the past had not been the most pleasant. Carlyle had offered Mill publication of The Diamond Necklace in 1836, but refused to edit it to Mill's specifications.[43] A later article on Mirabeau went through serious printing difficulties, including the loss of Carlyle's revisions. He confessed he began "to weary of the treatment I experience here."[44] This usurpation by Robertson proved to be the last of a series of unfortunate incidents in what had become a burdensome relationship with a periodical whose philosophy Carlyle disliked, and which he felt with some justification had used him ill.[45]

This is a logical explanation for a somewhat strange set of circumstances. Carlyle was a well-known and sought-after reviewer. A sharp letter to Mill over Robertson's action would certainly have seen the topic restored to him. Carlyle made no such demand. His

pride played a part here, but he was also rather relieved and pleased with himself at having ended his relationship with the Review. This pleasure seems to hold the key to his response. He wanted to work at the writing he knew well and loved best, but on his own terms. With increasing fame, prestige and income he was better able to make up his mind independent of "blockhead" editors. In a letter to his mother on 29 December, just after this incident, Carlyle wrote that Robertson "tho' a great admirer of mine, does not suit me at all. -- I am beginning to read books with a kind of view towards writing somewhat; but the writing lies a good way off yet I think. The best is, that I am not so dreadfully pushed now, and can wait a while till the spirit move me."[46] Though Carlyle had more than thirty years of active writing still ahead of him, his contributions to the periodical press would never be so extensive as they had been in the previous decade. Indeed, it is fair to say none of them would be all that important. "Baillie the Covenanter" or "The Prinzenraub" offer no comparison to "Characteristics" or "The Diamond Necklace." It would ascribe too much importance to this incident to say that it alone was responsible for Carlyle's diminished contributions to periodicals, but it was an important factor in shaping his attitude. It did help him realize he could be more his own man.

It also awoke for good a long-slumbering interest in Cromwell and the Commonwealth, which is the main concern here. Carlyle decided he would continue work on this topic, and his reasons for doing so appear to have been two. It genuinely interested him and he wanted to pursue it further[47] while secondly, a desire to study his own country's heritage and history had taken hold of him. ". . . on the whole I want to get acquainted with England," he wrote.[48] At

the close of his letter to his brother John relating the incident with Robertson Carlyle offered this teaser: "I have not done with Cromwell yet, however; nay I have thoughts of -- But you shall hear better next time."[49]

Carlyle was "turned partly toward Oliver Cromwell and the Covenant time in England and Scotland" when he next wrote his mother on 13 January 1839. Although he found the subject "large and full of meaning" he could as yet propose no goal for his studies.[50] At the same time Carlyle noted the offer of "Cambridge people" to lend him books out of that University's library. The offer came through the efforts of a Cambridge person, one Douglas Heath, a barrister.[51] Carlyle noted a "large Portmanteau of Books" about the Civil War arrived at the beginning of February, by which time he had been embarked on a reading course for some four weeks, at least.[52] The subject, he wrote John (5 Feb. 1839), was inferior to the French Revolution, but England had hitherto been a great mystery to him and he now had a chance to study his own country. Cromwell, along with Montrose, attracted him; together they were the period's most striking personalities. In what was the first and among the best of a well-nigh interminable series of laments Carlyle complained about the thickness of the subject, calling it "Dutch-built, heavy-bottomed; with an internal fire and significance indeed, but externally wrapt in buckram and lead."[53] In an important reference to his developing view of Cromwell he wrote to Emerson on 8 February, confessing his reading had convinced him "I know nothing and nobody knows anything" about the subject of the English Commonwealth. Whether anything would come of his studies he did not know.[54]

Carlyle's uncertainty regarding the goal of his studies is

revealed in two other sources. A Journal entry contemplates, of all things, a tragedy based on Montrose. This came on 6 February. The intention might be discounted as a proverbially Carlylean flight of fancy did not the same "faint half-purpose" appear in a remarkable surviving manuscript dated 10 February, 1839, titled "Gropings about Montrose."[55] "I have thought of a Tragedy of Montrose; but too vaguely as yet; and then, at any time, what would I do in tragedy! It is a think worth investigating nonetheless."[56] The reason why Carlyle never seriously involved himself in writing a drama on the Scottish cavalier was the character's lack of a truly disinterested heroic quality, which Carlyle discovered as he studied Montrose further.[57]

Though this manuscript is titled "Gropings about Montrose," it is really a collection of gropings about a number of subjects including war in general, and the tautological excesses of the English revolutionaries. There are also incisive pronouncements on the characters of several lesser figures in the English rebellion, reading notes, some most interesting and revealing early comments on heroes and hero-worship, and a discourse on Cromwell. As fascinating a glimpse as this piece provides on Carlyle's thought at the time, the concern here is mainly with Cromwell, although finding him and the idea of hero worship linked so closely at so early a date is an important discovery, both for Carlyle and us. For he would return to the hero-worship theme in his lectures on the subject in 1840, and the subject was probably discussed in the lecture course of 1839. Hero-worship is also central to Past and Present, Cromwell, and Carlyle's later biography of Frederick; indeed, the idea of strong, forceful, progressive leadership was to dominate Carlyle's writing

for the rest of his life.[58] Here in the "Gropings" that idea is found writ small. If the Cromwell presented in these well-articulated jottings is not quite the same great man offered in 1840 and 1845, the theory that would apotheosize him exists here in well-defined fetal state.

This earliest-known revision of Carlyle's previous opinions regarding Cromwell begins with what had already become a ritual complaint about the period; Carlyle calls the Commonwealth a "wooden formality" for its love of precedents and constitutional wrappages.[59] He proceeds, somewhat ironically, to praise Cromwell for his "plain English." As far as Cromwell was concerned, the fight for the notion of "King and Parliament" was a fiction; he would as soon shoot the King as he would any other enemy he met in battle. Carlyle then discusses hero-worship and other subjects before returning to Cromwell. With irony turned upon itself, in view of later developments, Carlyle exclaimed:

> Cromwell was a <u>dumb</u> man of genius if ever one was dumb. No worse speeches are on record than his. Consider that one, printed in Whitlocke, on dissolving his first parliament; reported evidently by a man intent alone on reporting faithfully. What a grunting, semi-articulate, phlegmatic, croaking, confused, inexplicable abortive rubbish-heap is that! Sentences begin but involve themselves in parentheses, lose their way and never end. A vortex, circle wheeling within circle, in complexity and perplexity, in confusion worse confounded. The effect of the whole is a low infinite croak of expostulation, complaint and angry rebuke. Daedalean art is simple to this mighty maze without a plan.[60]

Yet following this outburst of a frustrated reader Carlyle senses there is something to be gained from this speech, some hidden beauty and elegance in it. Cromwell saw, and demanded that others see and acknowledge the hand of God ordering their daily lives and

all worldly movements. "Yet he does utter himself about . . . the damnableness of calling those great occurrences (institution of the Protectorate among others) mere contrivances of men, and not births of Providence, things sent of God." Carlyle concluded rather more gently and charitably:

> Withal it is not uninteresting that oration, chiefly <u>because</u> it is so unspeakably bad, so indubitably artless, unpremeditated. A distinct sincerity is visible in the croaking speaker; large lineaments of a purpose and conviction loom to the attentive eye thro' that shapeless London fog. There as he hawks and stutters and painfully flounders as if his oration would swallow him, not he utter it, you discern authentically what he would be at; and indeed that clear words would have been a false representation of the thing, for the thing itself is crude, half-born, only struggling yet to be.[61]

What is here written so closely resembles Carlyle's "later" view of the speeches, stripping away the hyperbole born of exasperation, that it could well preface this same speech in Carlyle's compilation.[62] More importantly, Carlyle's view of Cromwell has now become Carlyle's own view. His sincerity, his faith in God, his ability to act, are all present in these "Gropings." It is a pity that Carlyle was to grope around the subject of the Commonwealth for another five years, before returning to the letters and speeches almost in desperation. He is so close to his eventual decision to do a compilation here, although he does not realize it.

If we seek a decisive reason as to how Carlyle came to change his mind about Cromwell we need seek no farther than his hero-worship lecture, "The Hero as King."

> We said above what shapeless, involved chaotic things the printed Speeches of Cromwell are. <u>Wilfully</u> ambiguous, unintelligible, say the most: a hypocrite shrouding himself in confused Jesuitic jargon!

> To me they do not seem so. I will say rather, they afforded the first glimpses I could ever get into the reality of this Cromwell, nay into the possibility of him. Try to believe that he means something, search lovingly what that may be: you will find a real speech lying imprisoned in these broken rude tortuous utterances; a meaning in the great heart of this inarticulate man![63]

If we seek why Carlyle changed his mind, his apprehension of Cromwell's true character provides the answer. And if we seek when, we might imagine a day early in February, 1839. Carlyle is seated over a dusty copy of Whitelocke's Memorials pondering Cromwell's seemingly unintelligible speech dissolving the first Protectorate Parliament. He suddenly realizes Cromwell was a sincere man who would act rather than speak. The religious spark that motivates rebellion is recalled to mind, and Carlyle sees the speeches -- and the man -- in a new guise. From hypocrite to hero, in one long and not-so-easy lesson. This is the essence of Carlyle's reinterpretation: He assumed that Cromwell was sincere, that he was not trying to obfuscate or slyly play on men's sensibilities. He then read Cromwell's speeches with the same assumption in mind, and his new view of the soldier and statesman was nearly complete.

Hero-worship is also discussed in the "Gropings" where Carlyle writes of the wastefulness of civil conflicts. People are displaced, their livelihoods interrupted, while the ultimate result is difficult to determine. "Meanwhile one great and clear gain, whenever it occurs is that of great characters disclosing themselves in such periods. Great characters it is true are born not made; neither do such periods or any other period cause them to exist and come into the world." Their beacons may shine brighter as a result of the darkness of their time, but that is all. A lamp lit on a sunny

day still emits light, noticeable or not.

> Enough for us that a great character, howsoever made visible, is simply both to great and to little the gladdest sight this lower world discloses. "Joy for the race of Adam!" All men will have then occasion to say: "here once more is a man." Him we will hold in remembrance, while memory has a place in this distracted globe. Our poets shall write epics of him . . . and all men shall sing and say in such dialect as they have "Adam's Posterity forever! Behold you, such things they can still do and endure!" --[64]

The foreshadowing here of two of Carlyle's chief later themes -- hero-worship and the greatness of Oliver Cromwell -- and the linking of the two -- leaves us breathless. Yet upon regaining composure we remember that while Carlyle's view of Cromwell was to remain virtually constant from this time forward, his decisions regarding what to write about were to irresolutely fluctuate and waver for several years to come. He sometimes questioned whether he would, or could write at all on this subject. A letter to Dr. John Carlyle (11 March 1839) relates the nebulous state of the Cromwell project. Reading on the subject "in a languid way" serious work "on this matter seems yet at a great distance from me." He further confesses "I <u>love</u> no subject so as to give my life for it at present. I will not write on any subject, seest thou? but prefer to ripen or rot for a while."[65]

This desultory reading about Cromwell and the Commonwealth may have had some influence on Carlyle's decision to lecture on "Revolutions in Modern Europe" this year. About the time he would have been preparing for his lectures, other non-literary activities demanded his attention. Active involvement in agitation for a London lending library had begun in January. At the preliminary stages Carlyle needed to "sell" his idea, which meant informal meetings,

dinners, and the like with potentially interested and influential friends, and also included a strongly-worded letter to the Examiner (27 Jan. 1839) calling London's lack of a good general-use library a "shameful anomaly."[66] In another brief contribution to the same periodical on a different topic, Carlyle presented his views on copyright to the public (7 April 1839).[67]

The lectures this year, once a topic was chosen and talks prepared, were delivered without great fanfare or satisfaction on Carlyle's part, yet with some pleasure taken in the pecuniary results.[68] Of this third of four courses of lectures there survives the least information. They were reported vaguely in the Examiner, but no transcripts or summary appeared. The third lecture, delivered on 9 May, is of interest because Carlyle dealt with Cromwell and Puritanism in it. The report of the lecture, given by Leigh Hunt, takes the form of a casual running commentary, more often than not at issue with what Carlyle said. This negative evidence, taken in conjunction with the earlier "Gropings," provides the only means of inferring what Carlyle did say. Hunt claimed that Carlyle employed a double standard in judging Charles and Cromwell, and took strong issue with the claim that victories in battle were judgments of God concluding "We need not show to what such arguments apparently tend." Carlyle maintained in essence that nothing succeeds like success when, according to Hunt, he held that success in a strong man tended to justify and excuse other character flaws, lying, for example, while weaker men, Charles among them, merely got what they deserved. Carlyle should explain himself on occasions like these "to avoid mistaken impressions," cautioned Hunt. While it cannot be asserted that Carlyle completely vindicated Cromwell, he certainly did champion

him, receiving in the process a last exasperated thrust from Hunt: "And Cromwell himself he certainly over-reached; for after all, in what did he succeed, except in making himself for a short time an unhappy prince?"[69]

For the purposes of this study the rest of 1839 scarcely demands our attention. Later this year Carlyle worked on two subjects, one of slight significance, the other one of his better extended essays. The former was "The Sinking of the Vengeur," a brief article which corrected Carlyle's mistaken report of this incident. Towards the end of November Carlyle completed his book Chartism.[70] Most of the summer, from early July to mid-September was spent in Scotland on holiday. October found him involved in leisure reading and plans for reprinting Wilhelm Meister, and the beginnings of Chartism. "I do not remember that I ever in my whole life was emptier of all strenuousness, or effort of any sort, of all meditation or purpose" is how he described himself at this time (27 July).[71] What reading Carlyle did do probably included some on Cromwell, for he still had the large hamper of books from Cambridge,[72] and he noted in his Journal in October "Cromwell! How on earth could he be treated? Begin to see him at some times in some measure, even to like him and pity him."[73]

Brief mention is made of Cromwell, Puritanism, and the Stuarts in Chartism. A long section ascribed to Carlyle's mythical Herr Sauerteig relates in an episodic manner the history of England. The Parliaments of James, for example, were the first in which the "Middle Class" "hitherto silent had begun to speak." The centuries preceding this had given rise to a cultivated England, "the accumulate manufacturing, commercial, economic skill which lay

impalpably warehoused in English hands, what auctioneer could estimate?"

Yet the most important development of these centuries, the culmination of which came in James I's time was the individual's acquisition of "the faculty and habit of thinking, -- even of believing." This "discovery" that every man possessed a conscience involved a long-term adjustment in the government of England. And Cromwell and Milton were part of the new expansion and its attendant adjustment. "Prynne's bloody ears were as a testimony and question to all England: 'Englishmen, is this fair?' The reply 'No, it is not fair!'" The subject of the Commonwealth then, was still in Carlyle's mind even as he earnestly addressed himself to current English social unrest. Cromwell was pictured as a man of conscience, while the implication is that the Civil War was largely a religious struggle, a position to be echoed and amplified in his final course of lectures and in Cromwell.[74]

In the new year references to Cromwell are somewhat more plentiful, but still do not indicate total commitment. As before there were other distractions. The library issue came up again, with positive results now in view, but wrote Carlyle to his brother Alexander -- whether lamenting or boasting it is difficult to say -- "it will not float off without me."[75] Tedious proof corrections for new editions of his older works occupied him.[76] The lectures, once decided upon would also demand attention and preparation. In late February he paused to write to John Forster, thanking him for his biography of Cromwell. The letter indicates Carlyle was still familiarising himself with the period, for he wrote he read the book with the attention "rather of a learner than of a critic." He then

went on to criticize. "But why do you make poor Noll such a knave. I cannot believe him to have been at bottom dishonest, or <u>false</u> at all. Poor fellow, he was swimming as in a dim sea of wrecks and troubles: difficult to make good work there!"[77]

By 2 March he was writing John he meant to show in his next course of lectures "Hero-worship <u>never ceases</u>."[78] Among the heroes Cromwell was prominently placed. His earlier reading would be put to good use, while last year's cautious defense would now become vigorous praise. The final touches would now be applied to the portrait. Some background details might later be added, but the figure of Cromwell was complete. In September he would write to Thomas Erskine what he was also to express now in his lectures: "I have got, not till very lately, to fancy that I see in Cromwell one of the greatest tragic souls we have ever had in this kindred of ours!"[79] But the correct impression of a subject in one's mind is not tantamount to its faithful expression on paper. In January Carlyle confided to Emerson that though he "often thought of Cromwell and Puritans" he did not know how to present the subject "alive" in book form.[80]

Nonetheless, the printed, expanded version of the lecture on the "Hero as King" is an admirable, insightful and stirring, if partisan view of "Cromwell and the Puritans." The lecture itself, the last of six, was delivered on 22 May 1840.[81] Throughout the course Carlyle reported the audience of "beautiful people" listened with "boundless toleration, eager attention." Yet in the end the lecturer <u>cum</u> preacher felt he "did little but confuse" his hearers, and himself expressed amazement at being so ill-understood.

Giving up the idea of taking his lectures to America Carlyle set

about writing them out instead. This was to occupy him the rest of the summer. By early July the first two lectures had been completed.[82] The "Hero as Poet," finished by 15 July was "considerably the best hitherto as written."[83] At the end of the month he took a week-long riding trip into Sussex, visiting the Bullers and Julius Hare.[84] The sixth lecture, dealing with Cromwell, was fairly begun by 25 August, while 3 September saw the labor completed. "I have done with my last lecture two days ago;" he writes matter-of-factly on the fifth, "and all is right here, -- except the weather!"[85] Exactly how these lectures were to be treated had not been decided. To Sterling on 19 September he wrote "My Lectures are written out, in a way; but I do not yet decide for printing them. They are not <u>worth</u> a rush to me, -- in fact I had said the whole thing already, tho' the people did not seem to have understood it then."[86]

A repetition of earlier thought or not, understood or misunderstood, the lectures were to be published, and came to form one of Carlyle's most enduring books. On 26 January he noted having struck a bargain "last week" with "the dog Fraser" to print the lectures, and adds "I am very busy <u>revising</u> the Lectures; am now through the First. I design to make a few changes. In five or six weeks I may fairly expect to be quit of the concern."[87] The book was published in March.[88] As has been noted, the Cromwell here portrayed represents Carlyle's mature treatment of the subject, and deserves our attention.

He first maintains that of all the classes of heroes the commander of men is the most important. The wisest men must be chosen to lead a nation: Therein lies the duty of a society. Any rebellion derives ultimately from a failure of leadership. Only through the certainty of great leaders is there "an everlasting hope . . . for the management of the world."[89]

This general introduction leads to a discussion of the Puritan revolt against Charles I which he sweepingly terms "the war of Belief against Unbelief." Laud is dismissed, however sympathetically as "weak and ill-starred, not dishonest; an unfortunate Pedant." His world was one of forms, of salvation by "old decent regulations." His failing lay in the woodenness of his ceremonies, for, as Carlyle points out "There must be a veracity, a natural spontaneity in forms." This veracity the Puritans attempted to realize in a virtual absence of forms while the demand for the freedom of the individual conscience was the essence of their rebellion. It was the Puritans, Carlyle maintained, whose pious revolution secured for modern Englishmen their most precious constitutional liberties -- habeas corpus, representative government, and individual freedom.[90]

Most of the Puritan leaders had of late been taken "down from the gibbet" of execration, Carlyle noted with approval. Yet one man still hung there reviled and despised:

> Him neither saint nor sinner will acquit of great wickedness. A man of ability, infinite talent, courage, and so forth; but he betrayed the Cause. Selfish ambition, dishonesty, duplicity; a fierce, coarse, hypocritical Tartuffe; turning all that noble Struggle for constitutional Liberty into a sorry farce played for his own benefit: this and worse is the character they give of Cromwell. And then there come contrasts with Washington and others; above all, with these noble Pyms and Hampdens, whose noble work he stole for himself, and ruined into a futility and deformity.[91]

Warming to his subject Carlyle contemptuously blames this mistaken view on "an enlightened sceptical Eighteenth century," while later in the essay he wittily maintains that "Scepticism writing about Belief" is akin to "Blindness laying-down the Laws of Optics."[92]

The belief that the struggle was or should have hinged on control of economic issues is a gross misunderstanding of what was a religious crusade.[93]

From this beginning Carlyle proceeds to a biography of Cromwell. "From of old, I will confess, this theory of Cromwell's falsity has been incredible to me." (Unless by "From of old" he meant "since February of last year" his contention must be disputed. His first known positive impression of Cromwell came then, as has been shown.) Such a claim of falseness was "the joint product of hatred and darkness" without any shred of supporting evidence. On the contrary, Cromwell was an "earnest, affectionate, sincere kind of man" while his "rugged stubborn strength . . . is not the symptom of falsehood." Cromwell's conversion was "this awakening of a great true soul from the worldly slough, to see into the awful truth of things": A realization that eternity, heaven and hell do exist. The mere fact that he remained an obscure country gentleman till well past forty stultified the claim of ambition, so far as Carlyle is concerned. His military role and parliamentary service were "honest successes of a brave man." Even the "stern business" of a king's execution earned Cromwell no condemnation from Carlyle. The action was the inevitable result of the war and Charles' duplicitous nature.[94]

Cromwell's active political career was also vindicated. His summary dissolution of the Long Parliament was justified on the rather curious ground that Parliament's attempts at democratic reform would have undone everything the Puritans had fought for.[95] Cromwell and his Ironsides had God and the right on their side. "It is in weight and force, not by counting of heads, that we are the majority!" Carlyle's highest praise was reserved for Cromwell's attempts to rule

in a godly manner. The Assembly of Saints was a "trial on the part of these Puritan notables how far the Law of Christ could become the law of this England." Cromwell's acceptance of a de facto kingship was simply his acknowledgement of a God-ordained fait accompli. Future Parliaments had the same purpose -- an establishment of just laws founded on the Bible -- but constitutional issues including the establishment of Cromwell's legal authority crowded out the more important religious and social issues. When Parliaments could succeed only in accomplishing nothing they were justifiably dissolved. Cromwell's authority, notes Carlyle, putting words into Cromwell's mouth, was neither engraved on a "Notary's parchment" nor was it based on a pleasant constitutional fiction; rather, it was founded on "God's voice from the battle-whirlwind." Even the often execrated rule of the Major Generals was a natural outgrowth of Cromwell's call to lead and Parliament's inability to govern.[96] Carlyle has Cromwell saying:

> I will go on, protecting oppressed Protestants abroad, appointing just judges, wise managers, at home, cherishing true Gospel ministers; doing the best I can to make England a Christian England, greater than old Rome, the Queen of Protestant Christianity; I, since you will not help me; I while God gives me life![97]

Carlyle's praise of Cromwell's speeches and the sincerity manifest in them was noted above and need not be repeated. The wilful obscurity many found in the speeches Carlyle ascribed to Cromwell's natural superiority, which made inevitable his being misunderstood by lesser minds. This portrait of an earnest, devout man raised up by God is concluded:

> What had this man gained; what had he gained? He had a life of sore strife and toil, to his last day. Fame, ambition, place in History? His dead body was hung in chains; his "place in History," -- place in History forsooth! -- has been a place of ignominy, accusation, blackness and disgrace; and here, this day, who knows if it is not rash in me to be among the first that ever ventured to pronounce him not a knave and liar, but a genuinely honest man! Peace to him. Did he not, in spite of all, accomplish much for us? We walk smoothly over his great rough heroic life; step-over his body sunk in the ditch there. We need not spurn it, as we step on it! -- Let the hero rest. It was not to men's judgment that he appealed; nor have men judged him very well.[98]

The tribute has twofold importance. It is a glowing vindication of Cromwell. And by its own admission it was not the first, although it may have been the loudest and most evangelically advocated. It is more reasonable and accurate to say that the nature, scope, and well-nigh defiant tone of Carlyle's view of Cromwell had not before been met, while Carlyle's further research would go farther to reinforce this vindication in the popular and scholarly mind than any previous author's efforts.

Secondly, in the lecture Carlyle had taken his first giant public step (of which we are certain) towards a re-interpretation of Cromwell. Previously the obscurity of his speeches had only served to convince people Cromwell was a lying hypocrite whose obfuscations harbored evil ambitions. Taking the same speeches, but a different assumption regarding the speaker, namely that he was a sincere, God-fearing individual, Carlyle produced a startling, scintillating revised estimate.

Chapter II

Aimless Research

With the lectures written out and somewhat contemptuously laid aside in the autumn of 1840 Carlyle began a vigorous reading program which, although frequently interrupted for varying lengths of time, would last until the death of his mother-in-law on 25 February 1842. His reading about the Commonwealth, the Civil Wars, and the period leading up to these eras was not concentrated on any specific aspect of these times. Not that this is something necessarily to be expected since Carlyle did not have available to him the scholarly monographs so prevalent today, or even the better narrative histories and biographies. Yet his general and seemingly haphazard approach, as well as comments made in his letters during this time, tend to support the conclusion that Carlyle was still attempting to immerse himself in the period as a preparation for writing about it. His views on it were largely formed. The specific subject of his book was not. His reading was varied, while references to his writing are imprecise during almost the whole of this period, which lasted until December 1843.

Gradually and perhaps somewhat accidentally Carlyle began to work towards a history of the Civil Wars including the incidents of the decades that led to that unhappy time. Cromwell came more to dominate Carlyle's thinking, and the hardening realization that he had been hopelessly miscast as a villain only made Carlyle more determined to somehow, as it were, rewrite the script. It finally became a question, not of how best to represent the period but of how best to represent Cromwell, since he so thoroughly dominated his time.

Carlyle began in September by contemplating the manner in which he would divide his time next year. "If God spare me alive," he wrote to John on the eleventh, "I will spend the whole of next summer in the country." This setting would be much more relaxing, quieter than "nigh-unbearable" Chelsea, more conducive to mental fitness. "I calculate that I shall be writing another book then, that it will be much easier to write anywhere than here." The important thing was that he had begun to feel the urge to write again -- and by this since he had just finished writing his lectures, he apparently meant a book the length of the French Revolution.[1]

Although the letter to John did not say so, Carlyle had started a reading campaign on the Commonwealth which he meant to carry him through the winter. To Sterling on 19 September he wrote "I am reading Puritan Histories Scotch and English; thrice and four times in my life have I tried that before, with inconsiderable effect." The lives of Cromwell and the Puritans were "buried under rubbish;" nonetheless Carlyle had sifted and shoveled enough to "see into Cromwell, for the first time, very lately, as one of the greatest amorphous souls we ever had in this land."[2] Many books came on loan from John Forster, from whom Carlyle "borrowed a huge stock, Rushworths, Whitlockes &c &c." His winter business concerned "Puritanism and Cromwell;" and his search became "more and more entertaining."[3] To Emerson on 26 September he wrote in much the same vein as he had addressed Sterling. "I am now head over heels in Cromwellean Books; studying for perhaps the fourth time in my life" to become acquainted "with our English Puritan period." The books were dull -- now a standard complaint. "Nevertheless, courage! I have got, within the last twelvemonth, actually, as it were, to see

that this Cromwell was one of the greatest souls ever born of the English Kin; a great amorphous semi-articulate Baresark; very interesting to me."[4]

These letters highlight interesting points. Cromwell's greatness is once again acknowledged. Carlyle also notes somewhat indefinitely his previous attempts to study the subject; in his own words he had made attempts "three or four times." By this he probably meant the brief study in 1822, the preliminary reading for the abortive Westminster Review article, what reading he did for the third course of lectures, and his studies for the lectures on hero-worship. Carlyle's references to these studies as separate and distinct occasions indicates he did not necessarily see or plan the continuity the modern observer may hope to detect. In other words, a view of continuous, unbroken development from December of 1838 until Cromwell's publication in November 1845, is probably mistaken. From Carlyle's own vantage point his earlier reading had awakened an interest in the subject but did not point inexorably or in any decisive manner to Cromwell.[5]

Another point in the letter to Emerson is more perplexing, at first glance. Carlyle writes that "within the last twelvemonth" he had come to view Cromwell as one of the greatest of Englishmen. This indicates a date since September 1839, which is seven months after the "Gropings of Montrose," and four months after his lecture on Cromwell and Puritanism in May. The previous summer Carlyle spent mainly on holiday in Scotland, not arriving at Chelsea until 18 September.[6] There is no record of his reading about Cromwell at this time. In fact, Carlyle was then expressing an interest, if casual, in works about current social unrest.[7] To Sterling he had

written after his return to Chelsea (29 Sept. 1839) regarding business dealings, his holiday, Sterling's appreciative essay about him in the Westminster Review, but not Cromwell.[8] What Carlyle was thinking about at this time was Chartism, in which Cromwell makes only a cameo appearance. This "twelvemonth" reference may be a slip of the pen or memory. However, it is also possible that Carlyle's actual view may have been changing somewhat more slowly. He had devised an interpretive pedestal on which his monument to Cromwell could be safely placed, but construction was not yet far advanced. He was in process of applying his reinterpretation to Cromwell's entire life. Thus, while sincerity and an embryonic greatness may have been attributed to Cromwell a year and a half before, it may have taken longer for Carlyle to realize the full extent of Cromwell's heroism.

Carlyle's autumn and winter reading was voluminous. To Thomas Ballantyne he wrote (8 Oct. 1840) "I have an immense stock of reading about English Puritanism and Oliver Cromwell, laid out for the Winter." The subject was instructive and left him with the moral that "Till we become Believers and Puritans in our way, no result will be arrived at."[9] He was busy, he wrote John (15 Oct. 1840) "with Rushworths, with Parliamentary Histories, with Puritanism and Cromwelleana." What would come of the reading he would not predict.[10]

Puritanism and Cromwell:at this stage of his reading the two subjects are scarcely mentioned apart. In a letter to his mother (3 Oct. 1840) the Puritans dominate:

> My Book is a very long way off yet, if it come at all. It is to be upon the Puritans, -- John Knox's people in this end of the Island, especially Oliver Cromwell: but who knows whether we shall ever get

> rightly into the heart of that, or <u>have</u> any Book to write about it?[11]

Yet by the end of October Carlyle's interest in the Commonwealth threatened "to decline and die." The subject, he wrote John (29 Oct. 1840), was far inferior to the French Revolution, the books "threaten locked-jaw." "Yet I say to myself a great man does lie buried under this waste continent of cinders, and a Great Action.[12]

Again Cromwell and Puritanism are linked, although this time the Lord Protector gets top billing.

At the end of the year (26 Dec. 1840) he confided to his Journal:

> Oliver Cromwell will not prosper with me at all. I began reading about the subject some four months ago. I learn almost nothing by reading, yet cannot as yet heartily begin to write. Nothing on paper yet. I know not where to begin. I have not yet got through the veil, got into genuine sympathy with the thing.[13]

Carlyle's studies continued until spring. It is not necessary to list here in great detail exactly what he was reading and when. Suffice it to say his letters during these months are filled with requests for books, pithy comments on the authors he had read, with insightful pen-portraits of prominent personalities of the Civil Wars, and the usual lamentations about sources. From his university acquaintance Thomas Murray came the long-sought <u>Letters and Journals</u> of Robert Baillie in the rare 1775 edition, more books came from Forster, and Napier's <u>Montrose and the Covenanters</u> was returned with thanks to J.G. Lockhart. Carlyle termed the king's cavalier a "right brave man, with his haughty shut mouth, with his broad mournful brow; a man of genius, -- a hero and hero-worshipper with nothing but a poor shambling Charles First to worship: one of the most tragical conditions. Ah me!"[14] Stronger language was reserved

for the Eikon Basilike, a work once attributed to the imprisoned Charles I. Carlyle condemned it unequivocally as

> one of the hatefullest pieces of Phariseeism ever put on paper; no more written by Charles I than by me; written evidently under the purest shadow of the Shovel-hat, by a Protestant Jesuit . . . . Ah me, that side of English things is very scandalous; deserved well to have its crown cracked by a brave Cromwell![15]

In mid-February Carlyle's routine was interrupted, first for two days due to jury service. This experience, trying even for the most civic-minded, was made more burdensome in this instance by a lack of amenities and a recalcitrant juror.[16] The decision to publish the lectures on hero-worship was reached in late January. Sartor Resartus was also to be reprinted and Carlyle judged that proof corrections would occupy him through early March.[17] As a result his reading in February was diminished. Books were available to him even if the time to read them was not; "all that has been suspended for some time with Proofsheets and chaotic etceteras" he wrote to David Aitken (22 Feb. 1841).[18]

Even once finished with these proofs Carlyle could not return wholeheartedly to his reading. At the beginning of March he was ill with flu and more interested in "scheming out some possibility of passing this whole season in the country."[19] Even as he schemed he made attempts to work. A hurried March note to Forster requesting more books reiterated his "detestation of the pavement" and announced a trip to the Isle of Wight that never took place.[20] Accepting with thanks another consignment of books from Thomas Murray on 2 April, Carlyle surveyed his progress while analyzing his interest in "the Puritan Revolt in England and Scotland." The reading campaign had not yet won him mastery of his subject, he complained. The

"bodily physiognomy" remained "invisible to me," yet "It is a thing I understand the soul of." How, demanded Carlyle, could such a "heroic Transaction" be reported as "an unreadable stupifying Stupidity?"[21] This was Carlyle's demand of his sources and his own writing. Above all, he wanted the past to be correctly understood, for only then could it truly live and offer proper instruction.

A useful correspondence was begun at this time when Carlyle sent David Laing several pages of queries about the Civil Wars on 12 April.[22] Laing was Librarian to the Signet, Secretary to the Bannatyne Club, and a knowledgeable, competent antiquarian researcher and editor, well-qualified to aid Carlyle in his research.[23] Most of this first letter concerned Jenny Geddes, a woman said to have thrown a stool at the Dean of Edinburgh in St. Giles Cathedral as he attempted to introduce King Charles' prayerbook in Scotland on 23 July 1637. Carlyle could find no contemporary accounts of the stool-throwing incident, yet he viewed this event as the true beginning of the Civil Wars.[24] An introduction of sorts between the two men had been made by Murray, who apparently borrowed books from Laing to send to Carlyle. Carlyle had also expressed an interest in securing a copy of the new edition of Baillie's Letters and Journals, of which Laing was editor; Laing had offered a copy provided Carlyle review it for a periodical.[25] Though Carlyle originally balked at such a proposal he did eventually write a review which appeared in the London and Westminster Review for October 1841. Throughout his work on Cromwell, he would continue to consult Laing. Such reliance on others is part of a trend. Carlyle already had books on loan from Forster, Sterling, Maurice, Murray and others. In the future, as his research accumulated, he would have friends perform a great deal

of legwork for him, including surveys of battlefields, the locating of scarce texts, clarification of obscure points of fact, and finally the locating of Cromwell's letters.

On 5 April Carlyle was escorted by Richard Milnes to his family estate at Fryston in Yorkshire. Somewhat unsettled in mind and body, Carlyle felt he needed a rest from his reading. His letters detail the leisurely pace of life in the country. Though Yorkshire was an area steeped in Civil War lore, with York long remaining a Royalist strong-hold and the battle of Marston Moor having been fought nearby, he made no effort to view these sights from that perspective. The subject was simply temporarily out of mind since he would later take some pains to view and often walk over Civil War battlefields. Carlyle left the Milnes' estate on the sixteenth for Headingly, near Leeds, and paid à short visit to James Marshall. He then visited his mother at Scotsbrig before returning to Chelsea by 6 May.[26]

In his absence from London David Laing had replied to his queries about Jenny Geddes. His research had turned up no solid evidence of her existence. "In none of the Records of the time," he wrote "can I find her named." In a short reply (11 May 1841), Carlyle thanked Laing and wrote "It is something to understand that no history of these things does now exist." This is a curious reply which bespeaks a curious view of history. To Carlyle an event could be apocryphal or even mythical, yet still be regarded as historical. So long as it had at one time been truly believed there must be some element of truth about it. He added: "How many nobler things have vanished even to the last echo of them . . . so that we do not now so much as ask if they had a history! It is sooner or later the

lot of all things." Carlyle had no further queries at this time -- a virtually unique occurrence in his correspondence with Laing.[27] Again, his mind was not wholeheartedly on his work.

The contemplation of another summer in London had become a scarcely bearable horror to Carlyle. "The braying uproar of this City is distractive and destructive to me" he lamented to Sterling on 13 May. Cromwell had become "ever more inaccessible." At the moment Carlyle was reading books sent to him by Varnhagen von Ense about Luther and the German Reformation.[28] During June Carlyle was most interested in securing lodgings by the sea for the summer. He finally decided to take a bathing cottage at Newby, near Annan for the month of August, while most of July was to be spent with his mother in Scotsbrig.[29] The holiday at Newby over in late August Carlyle escorted Jane to her mother's house at Templand, then revisited his mother at Scotsbrig. Visits to Thomas Spedding and Harriet Martineau followed before the couple returned to Chelsea about 15 September, according to Carlyle's reckonings.[30]

Summing up his holiday in his Journal he wrote on 3 October of his sullen, atrabiliar attitude throughout his stay in Annandale. "I do fear I gave offence to right and left, but really could not well help it." He also noted, in clipped phraseology his holiday reading: "Much French rubbish of novels read, a German book on Norse and Celtic Paganism, little other than trash either. Nothing read, Nothing thought,Nothing done. Shame!"[31]

Once more at his desk, among his Cromwellian books, papers, and thought, total concentration could not, or would not come. A rambling manuscript within the Forster Collection mirrors the farrago of interests distracting him from his work. The draft is dated by

Carlyle "(27 Septr, 1841; Monday 1½ p.m.)!" He begins with a routine lament: "O Oliver, my Hero, can I by no alchemy extricate thee." "thou wert no chimera," he continued, "neither was thy Time chimerical. A most rugged, real, hard-struggling Time; when the sun shone on heroic toils of men; and millions wore out cheerfully their life, fighting with all weapons the battle of the brave. -- (awful trash!)"[32] Carlyle continued in this tone for three paragraphs, then began to discuss the general inadequacy of writing and whereabouts of Cromwell's soul, from which he moved on to speculations on the first man and evolution: "All out of shellfish, says Dr. Darwin." This extended detour from Cromwell was concluded by an attempt to arithmetically estimate the exact number of his ancestors, after which, seemingly in frustration he wrote "(Pause, today!) -- (ach, Himmel!)"[33]

The section of manuscript following these miscellaneous gropings of random thoughts is even more unusual. It shows a preoccupation with Cromwell and his time, yet a corresponding search for the proper form in which to portray them. This section sketches out a drama in twelve acts based on Cromwell's life. The staging of this "Life and Times" was to be done with some thoroughness, from the "small heroism" of his country gentleman's life at Ely, through his rise to prominence in the military during the Civil wars and his service in the Scottish and Irish campaigns, his political service as Lord Protector, and his final illness "floating like a feather in the sea of things," and death.[34] This section of manuscript dates to the end of September, 1841.[35] There is also a revised, somewhat pared-down version of the same drama, now in six acts. Although undated perhaps it came shortly after completion of the first: This version ends with Carlyle commenting on Cromwell's death: "Ye could not vanquish him; God called him home. Predictions. (Forelooking, elegiac --

invincible) ah!"[36] These plans for a drama came to nothing, although it has been pointed out that in some ways Carlyle's eventual structure for Cromwell would resemble that of the twelve act drama.[37]

Carlyle's continuing indecision about a form for his history is shown in a Journal entry dated 3 October:

> Ought I to write now of Oliver Cromwell? Gott weiss; I cannot yet see clearly. I have been scrawling somewhat during the past week, but entirely without effect. Go on, go on. Do I not see so much clearly? Why complain of wanting light? It is courage, energy, perseverance that I want. . . . What a need of some speaker to the practical world at present! They would hear me if, alas! I had anything to say. Again and again of late I ask myself in whispers, Is it the duty of a citizen to be silent, to paint mere Heroisms, Cromwells &c? There is a mass as of chaotic rubbish continents lying on me, crushing me into silence. Forward! Struggle![38]

The struggle was a sore one for Carlyle at this time. He was constantly attempting to write, yet unable to concentrate his efforts on Cromwell or the Commonwealth. Surviving manuscripts from this period within the Forster Collection include discussions of biography, revolutions, Christianity and Odin.[39] There are many pages of reading notes, and a discourse on work: "'Honour the able-man; and for this end (first of all) know him, know where to seek for him.'"[40] And there was also a sketch on a subject he had mentioned before in the "Gropings About Montrose" and would recur to again and again:

> Oliver's rough outbreaks of speech. . . . a man intemperate of speech. In fact a man of (hot hasty temper/ of infirm temper), hasty, hot, yielding corruscations; -- such a huge unspoken earnestness within him, unuttered, unutterable thoughts, fermenting in nameless mournful unrest: could you but speak them, could you but act them, these true thoughts of his, what a thrice-great were you! . . . I grieve to say he is a man occasionally rather of intemperate tongue. A man who will never succeed in political life, his tongue

> being so loose? Patience, he will learn reticence as he advances; will know to keep trust and his lips shut when once he is entrusted: at present being yet nothing, why should he so lock his words? They are sincere words, which there is worth in uttering withal. The utterance of them gives him great relief. By and by a growl will serve him for a speech, and even express as much.[41]

From the earliest days Carlyle was fascinated with Cromwell's utterances. In this example Carlyle's inchoate comments mirror that fascination as well as his uncertainty over the direction of his reading.

In the midst of these comments and these continuing attempts to get on with his subject he wrote "Baillie the Covenanter," his review of David Laing's new edition of Robert Baillie's Letters and Journals.[42] Carlyle had seemed hostile to the idea of a review. To Hickson, the present London and Westminster Review editor he had written on 15 October "certainly as a short article nothing could be made of it."[43] However, by 3 November Jane reported "My husband is writing an article with such a vengeance that I hardly get twenty words /out/ of him thro'out the day."[44] Carlyle's next letter of queries to Laing on 20 November abruptly noted "an Article on Baillie's Letters coming out in the next Westminster Review," while he confessed to Sterling on 3 January 1842 that his sense of obligation to Laing was a contributing factor in writing it.[45]

"Baillie the Covenanter" is largely made up of a series of excerpts from Laing's book, most of them dealing with Strafford's trial. However, the article does express Carlyle's frustration at the unknowability of the period. In order to understand a period one must read one's self into it, Carlyle maintained. Baillie's

writings were helpful in this respect because he was a veracious man, an accurate observer, and often an eyewitness. The impression of an event on an eyewitness's mind was compared to the image produced by a daguerreotype. Yet in the image produced by the writers in the Commonwealth period "the traces are so faint, confused, as good as non-extant to our organs."[46] Carlyle seems to express his own frustration with this period, and with himself when he laments:

> Alas, you read a hundred autograph holograph letters, signed 'Charles Rex,' with the intensest desire to understand Charles Rex, to know what Charles Rex was, what he had in his eye at that moment; and to no purpose. The summary of the whole hundred autographs is vacuity, inanity; like the moaning of winds through desert places, through damp empty churches: what the writer did actually mean, the thing he then thought of, the thing he then was, remain forever hid from you. No answer; only the ever-moaning, gaunt, unsyllabled woo-woo of wind in empty churches! Most provoking . . . for there is not a word written there but stands like a kind of window through which a man might see, or feels as if he might see, a glimpse of the whole matter. . . . Had a man but intellect enough, -- which, alas no man ever had, and no angel ever had, -- how would the blank become a picture all legible![47]

During this same period -- October and November -- that Carlyle was writing "Baillie" he also produced a rambling, discursive collection of commentary on publishing, dealing mainly with the book clubs of his day which were engaged in printing rare and valuable manuscripts for private circulation. (Baillie's Letters and Journals as edited by Laing was an example of such a publication, having been published by the Bannatyne Club.) Carlyle's low opinions of the clubs stemmed from his belief that most of what they printed was worthless from the historian's point of view, while the potential and need for publication of well-edited useful texts was great.[48] This writing has little to do with Cromwell, and no more notice of it will be

taken here, except to remark again that for Carlyle to write such a thing his mind could not entirely have been on his research. As Heather Henderson has commented: "It is as if Carlyle, finding that the ghost of Cromwell could not be raised that day, turned aside to another subject which interested him."[49]

Carlyle continued to struggle to write and read. He refused to write an article, the subject of which is not known, for the Foreign Quarterly Review, writing by way of explanation to Forster in December 1841, "if I get fairly into that Cromwell, I shall have to go on, incessant, as a shot projectile, as a kindled fire, and not stop." He added "All that I have written hitherto has gone straight to the fire!"[50] To his mother on 8 January he wrote that his book "is to be something about" the Civil War, but Cromwell was "mainly or almost exclusively" thought about. His mother might well ask what else was new since Carlyle had now been involved with this topic for over three years. He confessed he had tried writing

> but found it was too soon yet. I must wrestle and tumble about with it, indeed at bottom I do not know yet whether ever I shall be able to make a Book out of it! . . . For the rest I am grown too old and cunning now to plunge right on and attempt conquering the thing by sheer force. I lie back, canny, canny, and whenever I find my sleep beginning to suffer, I lay down the tools for a while. By Heaven's great blessing I am not now urged on by direct need of money.[51]

Carlyle wrote letters almost identical in tone to his brother Alexander and sister Jean.[52] From Robert Browning (1 Jan. 1842) he requested the "noisy blockhead" Heath's Chronicle of the Civil Wars and other books.[53]

About the same time Carlyle wrote of his frustration in a draft, comparing himself to a second-rate artist:

> A mere sketcher shifts hither and thither round
> a view to catch some picturesque glimpse of it:
> on all sides I try Cl, but he is dull blank on
> all sides; only within him lies a great meaning,
> the meaning of a great man in the world's history:
> alas, how to extract that? Here is cloud enough;
> but the lightning where? -- All cloud has lightning
> in it (electric virtue in it) were there a means
> of bringing it out![54]

As of yet Carlyle was still drawing preliminary sketches. The flame-picture was still not possible because the subject had yet to "blaze" within him.

His book was "still in the agonies; not yet begun!"[55] when tragedy struck with the death of Jane's mother on 25 February. This caused an immediate and prolonged interruption in his work, since he was needed at Templand to settle the estate. Various irritating, melancholy and often maddening details occupied him until the end of April. Work on Cromwell, of course, became impossible.[56] To Emerson on 28 March he confessed he "had begun to write some Book on Cromwell" but "with the loss of still farther labour" he might have to abandon the project. But this was idle talk, in view of the rest of Carlyle's sentence: "and then the great dumb Oliver may lie unspoken for ever; gathered to the mighty Silent of the Earth; for, I think, there will hardly ever live another man that will believe in him and his Puritanism as I do."[57] Carlyle seemed convinced he best understood the man, the period, and the faith animating them both; and that it was his duty to write the book that would make others understand. How could he shirk such a responsibility, and yet at the same time, how could he write the book?

Yet as the year progressed it would become more difficult to concentrate on Cromwell. His acute awareness and sensitivity to the often wretched social conditions surrounding him now becomes more evident in his correspondence. In coming months this awareness would dominate it. An example of this comes in letters written after he returned to Chelsea in May. Once Grace Welsh's estate was settled Carlyle took a brief holiday in Lancashire. On Saturday 7 May which was also the date of his return to London, he visited the battlefield of Naseby accompanied by Dr. Arnold of Rugby School. In a letter written to James Spedding on 10 May he first detailed his stop in Manchester, sorrowfully chronicling the distress of that town, then related an incident of the previous Saturday which he probably read about in the newspapers:[58]

> What a strange country we are in at this hour! Two thousand men and women assembled the other Saturday night before the Provost's door in Paisley, and stood, without tumult, indeed almost in silence: when questioned as to their purposes, they said they had no money, no food nor fuel, they were Fathers and Mothers, working men and women, and had come out there to see whether they could not be saved alive. . . . O Peel, O Russell -- indeed O England and all Englishmen! We have gone to the accursed Law of Egoism and Mammon, and every sort of Atheism, which was a lie from the beginning; and now it has broken down under us, and unless we can recover ourselves out of it, the abyss is gaping for us.[59]

Carlyle went on to describe briefly the battlefield of Naseby, proclaiming it "equal to Marathon or better." Yet barely has his description begun than he interrupts himself to say "I pray daily for a new Oliver. Something it might be could we so much as get to see the old one!"[60] Obviously his desire to reveal Cromwell remained, but modern distress so touched him that he felt it a more immediate concern that needed revealing as well. The "new Oliver"

was no doubt Carlyle's vision of a wise, modern leader. Little did he know that an ancient English leader would soon help him reveal the root of modern distress.

His attempts to study continued, as did his discontent and indecision. Naseby had not inspired him, he wrote to Emerson on 19 July; the visit had not made straight the crooked path to Cromwell, who remained "sunk under two hundred years of Cant, Oblivion, Unbelief and Triviality of every kind." He again threatened to abandon the subject. If it could not be made relevant it served no purpose. "There is no use in writing of things past, unless they can be made in fact things present." Unsettled as he was Carlyle had not lost his sense of humor. If Emerson never heard from him again, it would be because "the Mud Nymphs have sucked me in."[61]

Carlyle's letters throughout the summer express the same sentiments. Distress surrounds us, there is no relief in sight because man has forgotten God, and Cromwell makes no progress.[62] To Spedding he wrote on 31 July that no society "could subsist on Cant and Benthamism." Yet, he continued, the English would have no more to do with their fellow man than handing him a pay packet once a week. To Carlyle the crux of the matter was this: "A man speaks of 'Hell,' &c.: but what is the actual thing he is infinitely afraid of, and struggles with the whole soul of him to avoid? It is what he calls 'not succeeding.'"[63]

Carlyle was himself not succeeding with his book. This explains why he accepted the sudden invitation of Stephen Spring Rice on 5 August to accompany him on a short trip to the Netherlands. Carlyle was by no means fond of travel and its attendant petty annoyances, and had he been more profitably occupied he would not have gone. Of

his decision to go he wrote, "My Wife urging me, my dreary unfeasibilities of Business No-Business (things which must and shall be done, and which cannot, as it were, be done) freely, alas, too freely, permitting me, -- I resolved to comply" with the invitation.[64] The tour lasted from 6 to 10 August, while a detailed and entertaining account of his wanderings was penned by Carlyle from 12 to 16 August, after his return to Chelsea and Jane's departure for a visit to the Bullers at their home in Suffolk.[65]

But once the travelogue was completed Cromwell became no easier. Indeed, Jane penetratingly questioned his attention to such an unimportant subject -- for Carlyle had sent her the completed manuscript: "is it not a mere <u>evading of your destiny</u> to write Tours just now with that unlaid and unlayable ghost of Cromwell beckoning you on!"[66] How this well-aimed dart must have pierced his conscience! His writing, he told Jane (23 Aug 1842) "lies all scattered like vapour."[67] To others he wrote at this time of distress in the North.[68] To Emerson he wrote of his own disquiet at his country's distress (29 Aug. 1842):

> I am partly ashamed of myself; but cannot help it. One of my grand difficulties I suspect to be that I cannot write <u>two Books at once</u>; cannot be in the seventeenth century and in the nineteenth at one and the same moment . . . . For my heart is sick and sore in behalf of my own poor generation; nay I feel withal as if the one hope of help for it consisted in the possibility of new Cromwells and new Puritans: thus do the two centuries stand related to me, the seventeenth worthless except insofar as it can be made the <u>nineteenth</u>; and yet let anybody <u>try</u> that enterprise![69]

This was Carlyle's frame of mind when he joined his wife in Suffolk on 1 September for a visit that would last a fortnight.[70] During this time he took a solitary trip on horseback through

"Cromwell country." Carlyle left from the Buller's residence on 6 September, and made his way on horseback to Ely where he "discovered the very house where my friend Oliver dwelt and boiled his kettle," and was moved to tears inside Ely Cathedral where he recalled "Oliver Cromwell's 'Cease your fooling, and come out, Sir!'"[71] This emphatic declaration of Cromwell's came after he had ordered the Rev. Hitch by letter to forbear his "choir-service." Hitch ignored the injunction, whereupon Cromwell marched to the Cathedral and stopped the service then in progress with roughly the words Carlyle attributes to him here.[72] The next day Carlyle saw St. Ives, where Cromwell first began farming, and his birthplace at Huntingdon. To his mother he wrote from Cambridge on the seventh: "I have <u>seen</u> the Cromwell country, got an image of it in my mind for all time henceforth."[73] Deep as the impression of this visit on his historical consciousness may have been, his social conscience was also troubled by evidence of distress he saw among the laborers.[74] His literary sense was soon to be awakened partly as a result of his visiting the ruined abbey of Bury St. Edmunds, the site of which is the setting for Book II of <u>Past and Present</u>.[75]

Back at Chelsea Carlyle looked to Cromwell once again. The day after his and Jane's return from Suffolk he was visited by the painter Samuel Laurence, who had recently completed a portrait of Carlyle. He brought Edward FitzGerald along. The two had not met before, but were to become, if not close friends, then warm acquaintances. More to the moment FitzGerald's father now owned a property including the battlefield of Naseby, and FitzGerald knew the land well enough to tell Carlyle he was mistaken in his assumption that a pillar in the field marked the center of the battle. The pillar, or "ass

of an obelisk" as Carlyle called it had been erected by FitzGerald's father to mark the spot where King Charles had watched the battle.[76] Sceptical at first, Carlyle accepted FitzGerald's offer to investigate further, and was soon convinced of his error when FitzGerald reported a mass grave a half-mile from the obelisk.[77] To a friend FitzGerald wrote "the identification of the graves identifies also where the greatest heat of the battle was."[78] This was exactly the sort of physical evidence that most impressed Carlyle. The open grave "blazes strangely in my thoughts" he wrote FitzGerald. "It brings the matter home to one, with a strange veracity, -- as if for the first time one saw it to be no fable and theory, but a dire fact."[79] FitzGerald would continue to offer assistance to Carlyle throughout his work on Cromwell.

Around 22 September he attempted to write again, confessing he was "doing what is in me, but that is not much."[80] It is possible these attempts were portions of his historical sketches, for some of them are found in draft form in the Forster Collection surrounding the next dated section there.[81] The date is 5 October, and on it Carlyle, rather startlingly, was writing about Norse legends. Prefaced to this section is the mournful lament:

> No son of Adam is more helpless than I; the <u>word</u> sticking deep in my throat, no bringing of it up; the matter all <u>un</u>utterable! It is as if a whole Trinacria, a Continent of Earth, lay over my head, which I had to heave up with me from the bottom of the sea, unless I choose to lie forever buried there. Ay de mi -- Help <u>thyself</u>![82]

Nothing he wrote satisfied him. No proper start had been made. "The beginnings of work are even more formidable than the executing of it" he wrote in his Journal (25 Oct. 1842).[83]

Yet relief, after a fashion, was on the way, and may even have already arrived. On 12 October Carlyle borrowed Chronica Jocelina de Brakelonda from the London Library.[84] The next day he wrote to an unnamed correspondent "Your Camden Society Book was about the most entertaining piece of Antiquarianism I remember to have read."[85] Sometime later that month he began writing Book II of Past and Present.[86] Although Cromwell remained on his mind for the next five months he was involved much of the time in other writing. His progress need not be detailed. Yet an undated, unpublished draft in the Forster Collection holds what may have been the first stumbling attempts to write about Jocelin and his Chronica, and therefore deserves notice. The first third of the verso of sheet 56 consists of an attempt by Carlyle to describe the circumstances surrounding the writing of Cromwell's first extant letter, interesting in itself in that it bears strong resemblance to the account eventually published, and also shows Carlyle tantalizingly close to his eventual decision to do a compilation. But suddenly, in mid-sentence, Carlyle interrupts himself, writes "Jocelin of St Edmundsbury.", underscores it, then begins to discuss the foreignness of the Chronica and speculate on the ancestry of Jocelin. "And the ideas and way of life of worthy Jocelin, covered deeper than Pompeii and the lava-ashes and inarticulate wreck of seven hundred years -- ! We shall need no apology for classing him among foreigners on this occasion."[87] The two paragraphs that survive are heavily revised, yet obviously the prototypes for the corresponding paragraphs and part of a third of Book II, chapter 1, which was the first portion of the book Carlyle wrote.[88] And yet after these paragraphs Carlyle seemingly shifts gears by changing

the subject. The rest of the sheet treats falseness in religion, which would undoubtedly continue the next consecutive sheet were it available to us for consultation.[89]

This manuscript was almost certainly written in the latter half of October 1842. With the condition of England question oppressing Carlyle's sense of justice and right; with a desire to write about Cromwell yet a corresponding inability to seize the subject; and with an imagination strangely enchanted by the Chronica and the setting of the ruined abbey, Carlyle chose the latter subject to mirror his concern for the former. The long-suffering Cromwell project was again placed in abeyance, once again momentarily viewed as an impossibility. "No Cromwell will ever come out of me in this world. I dare not even try Cromwell." He wrote in his Journal (21 Dec. 1842).[90]

Towards the end of the year he openly admitted he was at work on a subject other than Cromwell. To his mother on 16 November he hastily wrote "I am busy writing; actually getting something to paper at present; tho' a small thing![91] By the end of November he had actually given Jane his draft of Book II to read. He would be involved with writing Past and Present until 8 March, while proof corrections and printing held up publication until April.[92]

The impression generally given of this five-month period is one of single-minded devotion to his emerging text. Yet evidence does survive to show Carlyle had not abandoned Cromwell, or even lost hope on it, his Journal entry notwithstanding. To his mother on 20 January 1843 he admitted "I could not go on with Cromwell, or with anything else till I had disburthened my heart somewhat."[93] In a paragraph discussing his difficulties with Cromwell Carlyle

wrote to Jane Wilson (9 Dec. 1842) "I write much; but it goes into the fire, into the lumber-drawer, regularly in a week or two."[94] A conceivable reading of this letter could be that Carlyle was attempting to write two books at once, at least for a time. To Varnhagen von Ense on 19 December he surveyed his progress on "Oliver Cromwell and our great Puritan Civil War, what I call the 'Apotheosis of Protestantism.'" and made the familiar complaints. But he went on to request an "intelligible Book about the military antiquities of Gustavus Adolphus's time." Cromwell's methods of fighting remain "obstinately obscure to me" Carlyle confessed; "the chief officers of our Civil War . . . had served in the Thirty-Years' War" and would therefore have gained their training in tactics on European battlefields. Hence his desire for such a book.[95] A final piece of evidence that Carlyle was still concerned with Cromwell even as Past and Present was being written comes in the form of surviving research notes dated 20 February 1843. These were written about the time Carlyle was reporting he had a fortnight's work left in writing Past and Present.[96] At least one folio sheet, and probably a second contain notes copied from the "Harl Mss. No 265." These manuscripts partially chronicle the disputed parliamentary election held in Suffolk in 1640, and Carlyle would in 1844 write the article, "An Election to the Long Parliament," based on them. They were housed in the British Museum, which means Carlyle must have made a special trip there, discovered them, and copied them partially, all before he had finished writing Past and Present.[97] The remainder of sheet 120 contains reading notes from various sources, many of which deal with Queen Elizabeth's death. A portion of these notes actually becomes a draft for a corresponding

portion of the Historical Sketches.[98] This shows that even in the midst of Past and Present Carlyle had no intention of abandoning Cromwell, and even continued his research and inquiry into it, if perhaps in a somewhat diminished capacity.

Past and Present once finished, and Carlyle's "conscience" somewhat assuaged thereby, he wrote in his Journal:

> It has been to me a considerable relief to see it fairly out of me; and I look at the disastrous condition of England with much more patience for the present, my conscience no longer reproaching me with any duty that I could do, and was neglecting to do. That book always stood between me and Cromwell, and now that has fledged itself and flown off.[99]

The completion of a major work often left Carlyle feeling relieved, as the Journal entry indicates, as well as somewhat shattered. A great bolt of creative energy had surged through him, and suddenly with the book's completion the current was shut off, leaving him empty and exhausted. He did not immediately take up Cromwell, because he did not feel capable of doing so. He wrote his mother on 5 April "I do not feel this Book has hurt me so much as Books are wont to do; I fancy I shall be able for another in shorter interval than the last was."[100] On 6 May he wrote her in a similar vein: "I do think of getting out in the country somewhere, and considering in solitude about the next book."[101]

This is an interesting thing to write in view of the above-noted Journal entry. Carlyle's entire family had long known he was engaged in a study of Cromwell and the Puritans, and had also been witness to his wrestlings with the topic. It is likely that what he meant in these letters by "considering" was a concerted effort to pin down a specific Cromwellian topic. This is more likely in

view of Carlyle's briefly-planned trip to Naseby in early May with FitzGerald and Spedding. Perhaps he hoped for inspiration from another view of this battlefield. In the event the trip was called off by Carlyle on 10 May "On a calm prognosis of the weather" and other circumstances. In the meantime, acting on FitzGerald's suggestion, Carlyle was off to the British Museum to read pamphlets concerning one of Cromwell's officers, a Colonel Okey.[102]

It was Carlyle's intention to spend the summer in the country, but before he was able to leave both family obligations and writing faced him each in their turn. His brother Alexander, after years of ekeing out a living as a farmer, and later a shopkeeper, had determined to leave Scotland and emigrate to Canada. Carlyle supplied his brother with £250 to help him make a fresh start while John loaned an equal amount. On 25 June Alexander and his family left from Liverpool. Carlyle was not present to see his brother off.[103] Though the brothers had lived apart for many years, the letters they exchanged reveal a closely-knit family. Such a parting must have been a sorrowful one.

Also before Carlyle's summer holiday he wrote a long article on the Paraguayan dictator Dr. Francia, for the Foreign Quarterly Review. The Wellesley Index states rather baldly that "Carlyle interrupted his work on Cromwell to write something for Forster."[104] It is true that John Forster was the Review editor at this time, and that he and Carlyle were good friends, yet there is no certain evidence concerning the origin of the idea for the article. The slender information available points to Carlyle developing an interest in Francia on his own, then perhaps being pressed into writing about him by Forster, who was quite aggressive in that

regard.[105] It was probably on 25 January when Carlyle wrote to his brother John "Can you ask Cochrane /of the London Library/ too if he has got Robertson's account of Dr. Francia (or whatever the title is)?" while two of the Robertson brothers' books were borrowed on 30 January.[106] Exactly what interested Carlyle in Francia is unknown. He had died on 20 September, more than a year before.

By 12 May Carlyle seems to have come to some agreement with Forster since he wrote to him then requesting further books on Francia, while Forster had just sent him the latest book of the Robertson brothers, Letters on South America (London, 1843), which Carlyle termed "their new Braying." Make haste in getting me more books Carlyle urged, "For I have a notion to take the Books all with me" to the country "and there write in the name of Heaven!"[107] The books he found to be of little value and concluded in a brief note to Forster on 17 May "Francia will continue dim till after far wider inquiries."[108] But by 19 June he was writing the article, as he explained to Alexander in a bilious tone: "I . . . am now for a heavy day's work at my article (a most beggarly piece of work, which I repent a thousand times having engaged in!)"[109] Writing on Friday 23 June he noted he was busy "all day and all night (till near midnight), -- running against time, at a very useless 'Article' which I had undertaken; which must be finished, being undertaken." He had to finish the next day since the article had to go to press the next evening.[110] "Dr. Francia" appeared in the Review's next number.[111]

Thus, what motivated Carlyle to write this article, or even to become interested in Francia is not known. It is basically a biography of the dictator who gave "a great shock to constitutional feeling"

through despotic excesses reviled by modern Europe.[112] Carlyle attempts to diminish these excesses by casting Francia in the role of a hero bringing order, peace, and some measure of prosperity to a half-savage nation. But nowhere are Francia's methods unequivocally supported by Carlyle. Via Sauerteig he wrote "'Francia's inner-flame is but a meagre, blue-burning one; let him irradiate midnight Paraguay with it, such as it is.'"[113]

Approximately ten days after finishing the article,[114] Carlyle left for a long summer holiday on 3 July. Though Charles Townsend Copeland calls this holiday a "professional journey"[115] Carlyle did a good deal more relaxing than working, if the relatively brief amount of time he spent viewing some of the battlefields of the Civil Wars or other locales with an historical link to that era can be called work. His first nights were spent in Clifton near Bristol, where he saw Chepstow Castle.[116] Thereafter he made for Llandough in South Wales and the home of an admiring lawyer, Charles Redwood. His restful visit to this solitary spot lasted until 17 July,[117] when he traveled on to Bishop Thirlwall's residence at Abergwili. This had once been Laud's bishopric, Carlyle was quick to write John on 18 July; "I was summoned this morning," he continued, "to say my prayers in the very chapel of the old chimera. I went but did not try to pray much, -- at least not in his dialect."[118] Carlyle rather enjoyed the irony of this anecdote, relating it also to Jane and his mother.[119]

Carlyle next headed northeast on 21 July.[120] From Liverpool he wrote Jane (23 July 1843) that he had seen Gloucester battlefield "not entirely without emotion" and made a brief survey of Worcester field from the Severn bridge. A local laborer who exclaimed he

"wished to God 'we had another Oliver, Sir; times is dreadful bad.'" impressed Carlyle enough to give him a shilling.[121] Carlyle spent August in leisurely fashion with his mother at Scotsbrig.[122] He wrote FitzGerald on 16 August that he had "made mighty little of" his battlefield visits, but still hoped to visit Dunbar and possibly Naseby during his return journey.[123] The desire to view Dunbar was also expressed to Jane (19 Aug. 1843). If after viewing this "last locality of Cromwell" Carlyle did "not write a Cromwell of one sort or the other, localities at least will do nothing for me. On the whole, I believe, I must set to work . . . by writing a thing of the sort in it. We shall make the attempt, shall we not?"[124]

Carlyle did visit Dunbar on Sunday, 3 September, the anniversary of the battle. He walked there from Haddington, which was where he was staying at the time. Earlier he had made a hurried visit to Edinburgh, seeing no one except for David Laing. After almost thirty months' correspondence this was the first time the two had met. After perusing his personal library and refreshing his memory with regard to the battle Carlyle felt ready for the field itself. The "ragged Irish reapers" along the route from Haddington to Dunbar excited his sympathy, but seemingly to a lesser extent than the want he witnessed directly before writing Past and Present. The battlefield itself was "more recognisable than any I had yet seen." -- something which would be borne out by his description of the battle in Cromwell. He "took an image of Dunbar with" him, then walked back to Haddington in the teeth of a stiff wind;[125] After visiting more friends, Erskine and Jeffrey among them, and stopping in Edinburgh, Dundee and Kirkcaldy, he left for home on 13 September, arriving in Chelsea two days later.[126]

Though the vacation had probably given Carlyle a necessary respite from the London noise and heat, as well as from writing, he did not recall it with favor. To Charles Redwood, one of his hosts this summer, he later (11 July 1844) incautiously wrote "I did not find that, last year, I got any benefit by three months of idle locomotion and spiritual stagnancy; no benefit, but only mischief."[127] To Emerson he wrote on 31 October: "I roved about everywhere seeking some Jacob's-pillow on which to lay my head and dream of things heavenly," but found only "restlessness" and "biliary gloom," and returned to Chelsea "thoroughly eclipsed and worn out."[128]

In this frame of mind Carlyle attempted once again to settle down to his work. Correspondence requesting information and assistance becomes plentiful once more. As ever, the lamentations are present. Dated portions of manuscript indicate Carlyle was still taking notes, even as he attempted to write. From Milnes on 19 October he requested information about one Darley, who had supposedly taken notes of the Long Parliament sessions.[129] Correspondence with Henry Cole revealed a possibility for primary research in the State Paper Office, from which Carlyle for the moment shrank, although his queries continued.[130] On 9 November he requested the Biographia Britannica from Mill.[131] Surviving portions of manuscript from this period are all reading notes, and concentrate on November dates. Around 1 November he was attempting to discover exactly what a subsidy meant in Charles I's time and wrote "Look for one in the hideous amorphous Statutes at Large." At the same time he commented on a pamphlet he had read concerning Cromwell's wife: "it is written like a flunkey, conceived and thought as by a flunkey; altogether of the flunkeys flunkeyish."[132]

As these citations show Carlyle's irritability was hyperactive. The veiled tension is evident in a letter from Jane to Helen Welsh in early December. Jane was ill and feeling neglected. She saw Carlyle three times a day, then he was "off to his Cromwell in which he lives, moves, and has his being at present." It was always his way when writing. He was continually "fidgeting and flurrying about all the while like a hen in the distraction of laying its first egg, and writing down every word as with his heart's blood."[133] On 9 November Carlyle wrote he had lost a day searching through Mark Noble's Memoirs of the Protectoral House of Cromwell "for a fact of no moment." "Ach Himmel! I lose a day any time I dip into any part of those accursed masses of imbecillity that profess to be histories and biographies! -- On yet, try it yet; an hour still is! --"[134]

Carlyle's letters and Journal mirror a similar self-exacerbating frustration. On 10 October he wrote "Oh miserable 'slip the labour,' what is become of thy endeavour? Not a word of it yet got to paper; the very scheme and shadow of it hovering distracted in the cloud rack, sport of every wind. I am truly to be pitied, to be condemned."[135] In the same letter to Mill requesting a book he had also written:

> In these weeks it has become manifest to me, after four years of the dreariest reading ever read, that I must actually write something on Cromwell and Puritanism, and get myself delivered from it. No more impossible task ever fell to my lot. I have already tried it successively on ten or twenty different tacks, and been everywhere repelled; and up to this hour I but write and burn, and then write again, very miserably. Were I once into it, the thing would go![136]

A seemingly more hurried Journal entry, probably made after this letter to Mill, hints at progress: "Have been making an endeavour one other time to begin writing on Cromwell. Dare not say I have yet begun; all beginning is difficult."[137] A few days later on 17 November his confession to Alexander was similarly expressed:

> I have begun a new Book, -- or rather, alas, I am still but struggling to begin one, and it will not prosper yet; which is of all operations the ugliest known to me. . . . By and by the mud settles; one finds hard footing somewhere, after infinite plunging; and then it goes along. My Book is to be on Oliver Cromwell and the old Puritans of England, analagous to our Scotch Covenanters. It will be horribly difficult.[138]

By the time he wrote to Sterling on 4 December he was sounding quite shrill:

> My abode is and has been, figuratively speaking, in the centre of Chaos: onwards there is no moving, in any yet discovered line, and where I am is no abiding: -- miserable enough! The fact is, without any figure, I am doomed to write some book about that unblessed Commonwealth; and as yet there will no Book shew itself possible. The whole stagnancy of the English genius, two hundred years thick, lies heavy on me; dead Heroes, buried under two centuries of Atheism, seem to whimper pitifully, "Deliver us, canst thou not deliver us!" -- and alas what am I, or what is my father's house? Confound it, I have lost four years of good labour in the business; and still the more I expend on it, it is like throwing good labour after bad![139]

The situation was approaching the intolerable. Carlyle was irritable and short-tempered because he was so utterly dissatisfied with his writing, once he managed to get down to it. And he was dissatisfied at least in some measure because he had not satisfactorily resolved how he was to treat his topic. Froude reports "he was trying to make a consecutive history of the Commonwealth, and as

he told me afterwards, 'he could not get the subject rightly taken hold of.'"[140] These sentiments are again and again corroborated by Carlyle's actions and utterances during this period. His frustration was curiously manifested on 18 December, by an incident amusingly reported by Jane. After relating Carlyle's bilious apprehension over his Cromwell she continued:

> He came into this room the other morning when I was sitting peaceably darning his stockings, and laid a great bundle of papers on my fire, enough to have kindled the chimney . . . . I fancied it the contents of his waste-paper-basket that he was ridding himself of by this summary process. But happening to look up at his face, I saw in its grim concentrated self-complacency the astounding truth, that it was all his labour since he returned from Scotland that had been sent up the vent, in smoke! "He had discovered over night" he said "that he must take up <u>the damnable thing</u> on quite a new tack."[141]

The book was having such a difficult time getting born, Jane wrote later to Mary Russell, that to help him Carlyle might need to swallow a publisher.[143]

Exactly what it was that Carlyle had been writing and then consigned to the fire is a puzzle that has never been adequately explained. Alexander Carlyle does not mention the incident of burning the papers in his Preface to the <u>Historical Sketches</u>, while the account he does give of this period is full of errors. He first claims that the <u>Sketches</u> were begun in October 1843 but offers no evidence to substantiate this claim. He asserts that they were written in chronological sequence, and that as Carlyle was writing them he came to regard Cromwell as a hero. This totally disregards the conclusions expressed in the "Gropings" and Carlyle's letters, while it also entirely ignores the lectures on hero-worship, given in May 1840. Carlyle was in the process of changing his mind by

February 1839, and his biography of Cromwell in the hero-worship lecture is an unequivocal championing of the Lord Protector. Oblivious to this, Alexander Carlyle finally maintains that, as a result of his altered view of Cromwell which was so at odds with what was then the popular conception of the man, Carlyle decided the best way to present his conclusions would be through a massively annotated collection of speeches and letters. Thus, as he explains it, Carlyle simply "laid aside" his unfinished manuscript of the Sketches in early 1844 to pursue this compilation.[143]

Alexander Carlyle errs often enough here, but in a note to his edition of New Letters of Thomas Carlyle he flatly contradicts his earlier opinion about what Carlyle was writing in these weeks. Commenting on a letter by Carlyle to his sister which does mention the burning of the papers and his intention to "try the thing on another tack" Alexander writes: "At this point Carlyle decided to postpone the attempt to write a biography of Cromwell /emphasis added/ until he had first collected and edited . . . his letters and speeches. Before burning the papers spoken of" in the letter to his sister "he had picked out from his MSS.," the papers eventually published as the Historical Sketches.[144] Alexander was unable to make up his mind about what Carlyle was writing, undoubtedly because he did not carefully consider the available evidence. Just such an examination leads us to offer the following hypothesis regarding what was being written, and what was burned.

Froude's comment should probably be taken as the most conclusive evidence we have of what Carlyle was working on at this time, with letters offering further clarification. Carlyle, wrote Froude, "was trying to make a consecutive history of the Commonwealth,"

but, he quotes Carlyle as saying, he "'could not get the subject rightly taken hold of.'"[145] This comment of Carlyle's is among the few positive statements available regarding his work at this time.[146] His letters speak in somewhat general terms, and individually shed little more than a diffused light on this shadowy incident. Collectively they offer greater illumination. There is a recurrent pattern to what Carlyle wrote to his friends during this time.

> I must actually write something on Cromwell and Puritanism. My book is to be on Oliver Cromwell and the old Puritans. I am doomed to write some book about that unblessed Commonwealth.
> No work I ever undertook prospers so ill in me as this of the Puritans history.[147]

Accepting at face value the statement of Froude's and of the letters, it becomes rather easier to see what Carlyle in the late autumn of 1843 was engaged in: a general history of the period leading up to and including the Civil Wars and the Commonwealth.

Now the only thing Carlyle wrote that even vaguely resembles a continuous history of the Commonwealth is the manuscript that came to be published as the Historical Sketches. It is anecdotal, disconnected in theme, disjointed in continuity, but with all its defects is still writing attempting to be a continuous history. It must have been this upon which Carlyle spent so much effort in those weeks. Such an assertion may come as a surprise, in view of the statement that the manuscript composed at this time was said by Carlyle himself to have been burnt. But an examination of Carlyle's letters is by no means conclusive on this point. It is actually Jane's witty letter, with its sarcastic tincture, that claims Carlyle destroyed "all his labour since he returned from

Scotland." Carlyle himself wrote somewhat more cautiously. He speaks of casting a "great mass of it into the fire." Later it is the "fruit of many a long week of diligent writing." He is most precise when he calls the burnt material "the scribbling of six weeks."[148] Carlyle nowhere says he burnt all his writing since his return from Scotland, although the purging effect of implying he had done so, as well as the drama of the event may have impressed him.

In attempting to show it was his historical sketches that occupied Carlyle during these weeks the qualification must be made that he had been working on these topics a good deal longer. At various intervals for at least the previous two years, different aspects of this general subject had occupied his pen. One of the sheets within the present collection, for example, is dated by Carlyle to February 1842[149] while earlier composition dates have been inferred for other portions. During this two years' time there were several occasions when Carlyle could have been at work on the sketches, and when his letters, Journal or surviving manuscripts indicate he probably was. By the time he returned to Chelsea on 2 October 1843 he had amassed a large collection of rough drafts describing various aspects of the era preceding the Civil Wars. What Carlyle then began to do was to revise and recopy these earlier attempts and try to put them into some logical format, the most logical being chronological. At the same time, he was also writing further sketches. It is most unlikely, as Alexander Carlyle says, that several hundred pages of manuscript were written in a single continuous effort in the space of two months at most. Aside from the physical difficulties, the content is not particularly unified or continuous. While this was never one of Carlyle's hallmarks

as a writer, the choppiness is present to a far greater extent in the historical sketches than in his other writings and indicates a composition spread over time. There is also the dated sheet to argue for an earlier composition of some of the manuscript. Other aspects of their appearance lead to the same conclusion. The sheets of paper are different sizes. Some drafts are obviously quite early, with closely written lines, numerous excisions, additions, interlineations and parenthetical asides. On the other hand some of the papers are much more finished, less closely written, more carefully footnoted -- all indications of revised material, possibly being readied for the printer. There are also some sections of the historical sketches in two manuscript versions; obviously one came before the other.

Of all the periods in which we suspect Carlyle of having been writing, this one in late 1843 seems to have been the most continuous, and the one in which he tried the hardest to settle into his topic of a general history. We have two important manuscripts that show this was a time of revision and continued attempts at creation. Both come from the Forster Collection and are lists or memoranda attempting to coherently order the various manuscripts on which he was then at work. The first seemingly tries to divide material into chapters and reads:

> Dr Laud's reformation; King, Queen (1). Parl<u>ts</u>;
> "Hold down your Speaker" (2,3). Two duels (4)*
> Laud's reformation (more special, 5). Hampden,
> Oliver &c Laud still (Church, 'order' &c) 6.
> The 11 years, Strafford (7). Loom of Time (8) --
> /<u>27 Nov</u>r 1843!7
>
> *The first duel about <u>Sir Hatton Cheek</u> need not be copied,
> -- if disseverable from the other -- I50

Obviously it is of the greatest importance that this section is dated, since it pinpoints the time and type of revision in which Carlyle was engaged. Clearly he was attempting to use this material in some sort of continuous history, as he told Froude. His emphasis was on religious and political events. All the topics listed in this memorandum can be found in the historical sketches manuscript. A second list, somewhat longer, was probably drawn up in the same period, but is itself undated. It shows the same searching for an ordered format as the first memorandum as well as Carlyle's frustration over the lack of unity in much of what he had written.

> -Memoranda concerning the MS of James,
>
> p. 5 Oxford Address to James /Laud is in it?/ --
> p. 13 (first chapter ends) then the Fen Country, draining of the Fens to p. 21; then the Cromwell Household to p. 28 / This shd be a Book -- might introduce into it "Ou Cloc!" (hardly!), and the useable parts of the S melfungus. Antidryt piece? . . .
>
> Hampton Court goes on to p. 42 /very questionable some of it! -- read it over again, and cut out a great quantity of it/ -- Puritan sermon extends to p. 47 (very questionable, -- or alas, unquestionable, all that!/ to p. 47 -- Kind of abstract (very unsuccessful) of James's Histy -- /The Cars, the Overburys &c all dead: Raleigh, Essex/ goes to p. 51 -- . . . .[151]

Based on these memoranda and the other evidence given it appears likely Carlyle was engaged in an attempt to turn his collection of historical sketches into the "continuous history" of the Commonwealth he spoke of to Froude. As December wore on his frustration and disgust mounted. His attempts did not improve much in the recopying or revising, while those now newly composed also failed to capture the essence of the Puritan struggle. It is also certain that Cromwell was coming more to dominate Carlyle's thinking,

while what he had already written did not deal extensively with him. No wonder Carlyle was angry, short tempered, something of a holy terror about the house, and no wonder he felt he had wasted four years or more of his labors. By not having written anything during that time that he deemed to be of lasting value, his time had very largely gone for naught. It was all a question of approach, or mis-approach, and when Carlyle realized this he drew together the early drafts to the historical sketches that were no longer of much use to him because they had been recopied. Perhaps along with some reading notes this was what he grimly flung into the fire. All this was done "not in any sudden rage at it, but after quiet deliberation, and deciding on this as the best I could do!"[152] He did not burn all the historical sketches, quite obviously, because they have survived in great quantity in various stages of revision. He did not only burn reading notes since he did say it had been writing. He did not burn an unfinished biography, because there was none to burn. Being less than thorough in his deliberate destruction some early drafts that had been recopied also escaped the flames. These are now found in the Forster Collection.

The historical sketches manuscript itself and other assorted papers, all the sour fruit of this period of vineyard labor, were now quietly laid aside and momentarily forgotten as Carlyle contemplated another approach to his subject. For at the same time he came to the conclusion the old framework needed to be torn down, the rudiments of a new foundation were, almost unawares, being put into place. In these same weeks Carlyle had on several occasions been trying to elucidate the early letters of Cromwell. These are halting attempts, but they are the germ of the altered approach

which eventually flowered into Cromwell. Since they are so much a part of Carlyle's composition process, they are discussed in detail below in chapter six. We need only note here that, once the history of the Commonwealth was abandoned, he needed to consider what to do next. He was close to a purpose, and indeed, had all along been close to it, but was not yet in control of it. The trees still obscured the forest.

Chapter III

Writing Cromwell

At all events the burning of his papers caused Carlyle to pause in his work. It led to a calmer, more reasoned appraisal of how to best deal with Cromwell. He wrote to William Graham two days after the incident on 20 December, "I have taken to read the Jacobite songs since; and mean, were the tumult settled a little, to try my problem on the other side. Another, and yet another: as my brave Father was wont to say, 'I'll gar myself to do it!"[1] By the end of the year (31 Dec. 1843) a firmer decision had been reached, but Carlyle was coy about revealing to his mother exactly what it was. "I am now trying the business on another side; with hopes of better prosperity there. Prosper or not, I must hold on at it; one one /sic/ side or the other I must get in upon it; and drive it before me."[2] The general history was unsuccessful for many reasons but chief among them in Carlyle's eyes must have been this approach's inadequacy when it came to the figure of Cromwell. Something more centered on this "chief of men" was needed. Thus a history was being transformed into a biography in Carlyle's mind during these critical days and weeks. However, he lamented to FitzGerald (9 Jan. 1844) that a "Life of Oliver Cromwell for the present race of Englishmen, in the present distracted darkness of the whole subject" was impossible. Too many misconceptions, too many misstatements, too many outright lies existed about Cromwell for a simple biography to alter opinions. Something different was needed. He excitedly explained this something different as he now conceived it:

> One of the things I have at length got to discern as doable is the gathering of all Oliver's Letters and Speeches, and stringing them together according to the order of time: a series of final rock-summits, in the infinite ocean of froth, confusion, lies and stupidity, which hitherto constitutes the "History" of Cromwell, as Dryasdust has printed it and read it. This I am at present doing; -- tho' this is not what I have the real difficulty in doing. I have made considerable progress; Time has eaten up most of Oliver's utterances; but a fraction still remains: These I can and will see printed, set in some kind of order.[3]

The reader, researcher, and Carlyle himself may now breath a well-earned, if slightly premature, sigh of relief. For the first time in his long labored researches Carlyle has stated a specific purpose. Even if it was initially viewed as an exercise preliminary to a more conventional biography of Cromwell, he had at last found his footing. Once and for all he was on firm ground and could now begin to climb. Puritan histories, Commonwealth histories, Cromwell biographies, years of varied readings and miscellaneous writings, and finally out of it all comes a "doable" subject. Carlyle would continue to complain: Rushworth was not transformed to epic poetry overnight. Yet with the illumination of a fixed purpose and his Northstar conviction of Cromwell's greatness, his upward path was now more visible than at any time in the past.

Until Carlyle pronounced himself finished with Cromwell on 26 August 1845[4] (and even for a time after this) he was to work at it with dogged resolve, persistence, and determination. Considering the length of Cromwell, and the fact that Carlyle was advanced enough by February 1845 to begin the printing of the book, he also worked with great speed. He took no extended holidays during this time, choosing to remain in London during the summers. He often begged out of dinner invitations, citing work as an excuse.[5]

One gets the impression he was attempting to make up for earlier efforts which he considered to be wasted time. Yet there is no doubt that his previous reading and writing speeded his progress now while the accumulation of such a mass of information so relatively swiftly speaks favorably of Carlyle's concentrated efforts during this time.

His research now centered on the collection and annotation of Cromwell's letters and speeches. Helping him locate them, or settle questions regarding them were his host of friends and correspondents. His own primary researches would take him to the British Museum and some local archives, although he preferred to remain at home and let others do his fieldwork.

The exact methods and sources for Carlyle's research will be discussed in Chapter four in greater detail. We can briefly note some of them here as well as the progress of his work.

First, there was the need to begin. The fact that Carlyle had started and completed many books before did not make his beginning this one any easier. He groaned to Emerson (31 Jan. 184[illegible]): "My thrice unfortunate Book on Cromwell, -- it is a real descent to Hades, to Golgotha and Chaos!"[6] And he groaned to himself (2 Feb 184[illegible]):

> Engaged in a book on the Civil Wars, on Oliver Cromwell, or whatever the name of it prove to be; the most frightfully impossible book of all I have ever before tried. . . . How often have I begun to write, and after a certain period of splunging and splashing found that there was as yet no basis for me. . . . Much I have blotted, fairly burnt out of my way. What will become of it and me? Sometimes I get extremely distressed. What of that? Was it ever otherwise? Will it ever be? Carpenters with contrivances to secure me from noises, treaties about neighbouring pianos, complaints of barking dogs, above a hundred "Musaeum headaches;" no books but "Rushworthian Torpedoes;" . . . and, to crown the whole, not a vestige of work actually done.

Carlyle went on to write he had spent the previous day in pursuing research at the British Museum (hence his "Musaeum headache") and would attempt "in quiet sorrow" to begin writing today.[7]

There is no doubt he was fairly begun during February. His correspondence holds a series of letters querying Laing, FitzGerald, and others.[8] In February he requested, and in May he received permission to consult the City of London's records from 1637 to 1663. Admission to this mine of information was gained for him by Lord Monteagle.[9] More importantly, Carlyle in his letters begins grudgingly to admit he is making progress. To his mother on 11 February he wrote, "As to my Book it is not absolutely stopping."[10] To Jean on 11 March he admitted, "My Book is still a frightful concern; but I begin to feel that it must at last get under way."[11] By the middle of June Carlyle was "still busy, and not entirely making no progress"[12] which sounds like an extremely tortured way of saying "I am getting on quite well." This is especially true in view of his letter to Jean on the seventeenth. "I am at a Chapter today," he writes "and taking a kind of half holiday!"[13] On 24 May he had written to Jean "It will be long yet; but it is fairly begun now, I hope, and equal or superior to half finished."[14] The mention of chapters causes one to speculate Carlyle may have been at work on his "Introduction" at this time. The only actual "chapters" in the book come in this section which also forms the most extensive unbroken portion of Carlyle's narrative. It would have been easy for him to adapt the sketches so recently laid aside into the historical portion of his "Introduction." However, there is no reason to suppose he was not also annotating letters as they became known to him. As he wrote to John on 6 July:

"I am getting the Letters up; I can work at that when at nothing else."[15]

By early summer Carlyle was more exclusively occupied with the letters and speeches. July found Jane off to Liverpool to visit friends and relatives. Carlyle labored on in Chelsea, sometimes pausing to write chatty letters. On 16 July he grumbled about a dinner engagement. "How am I ever to the /Derwent/ Coleridges tonight? I half prophesy that I will fall sick, take to Cromwell, and leave them and their twaddle progressing at their own pace devilward!"[16] Solitary yet productive now, he wrote Jane on 20 July that the principal events of his day were "The arrival of your letter . . . and the partially successful decipher-ing of one of Cromwell's."[17]

By 29 July Carlyle was well-advanced with the letters. "I am fast gathering Oliver's letters together; have a big Heap of them copied with my own hand, and tolerably elucidated." He added "The ground grows always a little firmer when I work in that quarter."[18]

In the same letter Carlyle mentioned his intention to make an article of some papers he had found among the Harley Manuscripts in the British Museum. Part of the collection of the noted anti-quarian Sir Simonds d'Ewes, they interested him as the only known source of information regarding an election to what he called the "remarkablest Parliament that ever sat."[19] Some of these manu-scripts were eventually included in the article "An Election to the Long Parliament," which appeared in Fraser's Magazine for October 1844. The article is more a collection of excerpts than anything else, with Carlyle's main contribution being the relation

of information about the participants in the election. He also commented that the preserved account was "the authentic mind namely, or seeing-faculty, of Sir Simonds D'Ewes and his Affadavit-makers, who did look on things with eyes and minds."[20] Here as always Carlyle stressed the importance of realizing the past was an entity that had once lived.

A "poor Scotchman . . . near starved" had copied these documents for a guinea though Carlyle found him to be a "quite loose-talking dishonest-minded little thing," dismissed him from his own employ, and sent out inquiries for another amanuensis "to copy me a great many things."[21] Carlyle's research had often taken him to the British Museum, the atmosphere of which he found oppressive, noisy and conducive to headache. A conscientious and well-directed assistant could spare him its unpleasantness.[22] An Aberdeen doctor and former classmate of David Masson's, now in straitened circumstances, was recommended by Masson and hired by Carlyle; and so Dr. John Christie, who would assist Carlyle until the completion of the second edition of Cromwell, was engaged at the end of September. Carlyle rather ungenerously called Christie "one of the ugliest young men of his day" and found him "not quite so dear weekly as a horse." Fortunately he was also industrious and "works like a lion."[23]

In September he took a brief ten day holiday with the Barings at the Grange, correcting proofs while there for the article on the "Long Parliament" and returned to Chelsea on the nineteenth.[24] Once home news of his great friend John Sterling's death reached Carlyle. Though long known to be terminally ill his passing was a sad occasion for both the Carlyles. When Sterling could say of his friend, "Towards me . . . no man has been and done like you.

Heaven bless you!" their relationship clearly ran deep and was a warm and intimate one.[25]

Froude maintains that Sterling's death caused Carlyle to work more assiduously at Cromwell.[26] This may well be true, but his brief September vacation indicates that he felt his progress was satisfactory enough to allow a holiday. He had refused several offers to visit friends earlier this year because he was at last making progress. By mid-September he was within five months of beginning the printing process for Cromwell, and he felt a rest and respite were in order.

Once back at Chelsea Carlyle noted on 2 October that he had "written two of Oliver's Speeches; made them all luminous to my own eyes, and am now upon a third."[27] Ten days later he wrote to John "I have got the greater part of Cromwell's Letters put on paper; the commentary of one often costs me a long week of rummaging: I have the Speeches still to do." He went on to note almost casually a decision he had made regarding this compilation. "My notion at present is to send out that as Book before long, let what will follow." In addition to the collected letters and speeches he contemplated another volume, also preliminary to his biography of Cromwell, in which the D'Ewes manuscripts, a small section of which had been used in the "Long Parliament" article, would be published more completely.[28] Pushing on with the speeches he worked on Cromwell's fourth speech on 1 November. "Today I have sat stiffly enough copying Oliver's fourth Speech with illuminations;" but "have made indifferent way."[29]

Three weeks later on 22 November he had nearly finished his compilation. Rather superfluously he summarized what his task had

been to Jean. The result of his labor he meant to set

> out as a Book by itself, preparatory to whatever other Book I may find myself equal to about the man. This will soon be ready to publish when I like: . . . but I do not mean to be all at once in haste with this; till I see how the other shapes itself, a little more clearly![30]

A hint that Carlyle would not want to pursue further work on Cromwell once his compilation was completed came in a letter of 23 November to Mrs. Strachey. Noting that his "business is now almost done" he continued nobly "we must then try others, which, if still harder work, offer work a little more inspiring." Yet betraying more accurately the weariness he felt at the completion of every book, he immediately added,"I begin to be much disaffected to the whole business of books, and often think, if I have ever done with this, I will never write another.[31]

Carlyle wrote to Emerson with similar emphasis on 16 February 1845. He vaguely referred to "so much as a possibility of ever getting out" from under Cromwell in "three months or so," although it would in fact be another six; and vaguely reiterated his intention to publish the compilation as it stood. This "I do sometimes think of bringing out in a legible shape, perhaps soon" he wrote. Yet commenting once again on his writing, his sources, and his public he exhibited a definite weariness, now tinged with asperity. He was growing tired of Cromwell:

> The reason why I tell you nothing about Cromwell is, alas, that there is nothing to be told. I am day and night, these long months and years, very miserable about it, -- nigh broken hearted often. Such a scandalous accumulation of Human Stupidity in any form never lay before such a subject. No history of it can be written to this wretched fleering, sneering

> twaddling godforgetting generation: how can you explain Men to Apes by the Dead Sea?[32]

While these sentiments were undoubtedly legitimate, Carlyle was not entirely frank regarding his plans for the compilation since he had already struck a bargain to have Cromwell printed. On 6 February he had written excitedly to FitzGerald, "I have three Booksellers all busy examining Cromwell's Letters, and hope to force one of them into some reasonable bargain about it without farther haggling, in a day or two."[33] Two days later, also to FitzGerald, he reported "I have, this morning, after infinite higgling to and fro, definitively settled that the Letters and Speeches are actually to be proceeded with as a separate Book Straightway. The Life must follow when it can."[34]

Thus Carlyle was advanced enough by mid-February to begin the process of printing and publishing Cromwell. Until August he would be busy extensively revising and augmenting his work, submitting it to his printers and correcting proofs. Of all aspects of getting a book published text revision and proof correction must be among the most tedious. Yet Carlyle took this process seriously as an opportunity to modify, correct, expand and improve what he had written. He was not finally finished with all these tasks until October, when he corrected proofs for the index to Cromwell.

An example of research completed during this period is the commentary attached to the ninth letter of the Supplement, one dealing with Cromwell's defense of sectaries in the army. Although it does not appear in the first edition Carlyle made a transcript of it and probably elucidated it at this time. It had been FitzGerald's idea to inquire if the Duke of Manchester's family papers included

Cromwell letters. His ancestor the second Earl of Manchester had commanded the Eastern Association for Parliament in the early days of the Civil War until an upstart Colonel named Cromwell saw him ousted for his reluctance to prosecute the war vigorously. Probably in early February the Duke communicated the existence of a letter while Carlyle then urged FitzGerald to secure a copy "without any travelling of mine."[35] The letter and other documents appear to have been given or sent directly to Carlyle by the Duke himself. Carlyle, with unaccustomed grace acknowledged this assistance in Cromwell, where he wrote the letter was "Communicated, with much politeness, by the Duke of Manchester, from Family Papers at Kimbolton."[36] The material was examined and partially copied by Carlyle some time in May, for in a memorandum appended to them he wrote "These Papers are curious. In memory of my gratitude for a sight of them may these Transcripts find a place at their side. -- T.C./London, May 1845."[37] Although an important letter this one was not in the first edition because by the time Carlyle received it the printing of Cromwell had probably passed the letter by.

On 4 April Carlyle wrote FitzGerald, "I am got to Naseby -- among my letters." His account of the battle was included with the letter for FitzGerald's corrections. "I want you with your best eyes to revise this, which I have got copied for you, and to correct it where you find need."[38] On 18 April Carlyle rejoiced to note "a fourth part of" Cromwell printed.[39]

On 31 May Carlyle received a letter from his printer, George Levey, detailing progress in the printing of the book which helps illustrate Carlyle's means of revision. At that point printing up to part five -- the whole of the first volume -- was nearing

completion. Part six describing the Irish war was partially printed. Once Carlyle had accurate transcriptions of the letters and speeches he seems to have sent them, unelucidated, to his printer. This is likely since in the letter Levey already has precise estimates of the number of pages the speeches and letters will take up in volume two. We can speculate Carlyle would then submit his commentary as he progressed with it. In a note to the letter, Carlyle, somewhat aghast, estimates that the "speeches alone without certain other little commentaries that are likely to prove indispensable" will come to 514 pages. This he calls "(a plentiful volume!)" The book was expanding far beyond a mere compilation as more "commentaries" proved equally "indispensable." Carlyle almost laments this, but does not seem otherwise displeased with his progress.[40]

By 17 June the first volume was completed while the second was approximately one fifth complete, and the book was turning out "a little better than I expected."[41] To FitzGerald on 27 June he wrote "Oliver is now made Protector -- God be thanked!"[42] From William Dougal Christie he begged on 17 July "an extract from Ludlow's unpublished MSs. concerning some pretension on the part of Ashley Cooper to have married one of Cromwell's Daughters." Carlyle had been previously given this information, but had lost it. He assured Christie this would not happen again "for tomorrow evening I shall be at the place for using it, if it is ever to be used by me." It was indeed used by Carlyle, and brings his narrative down to June 1656, a bit above two years before Cromwell's death.[43]

Jane had gone to visit relatives in Liverpool in July while Carlyle remained at Chelsea bearing down on his work. On 1 August

he wrote her that the "last letter of Oliver's" had been copied. "I will try hard yet to be through the original stuff this week. There will then be a conclusion of some kind to do; an index to set going. After which I am off in's freie."[44] This estimate of only a week proved too optimistic, for he wrote FitzGerald on 18 August "Cromwell's own things are now out of my hands, -- the last this very day." He reiterated the need for a conclusion and an index, now overestimating the time it would take by allowing himself another fortnight.[45] The conclusion Carlyle spoke of was undoubtedly the final section of the book headed "Death of the Protector." Here Carlyle described with pathos the final months and days of Oliver's life. He grieved with Oliver over the death of his son-in-law and daughter. His last illness, a final, bravely fought battle was not without its moral: "'So stirbt ein Held,' says Schiller, 'So dies a Hero! Sight worthy to be worshipped!' -- He died, this Hero Oliver, in Resignation to God; as the Brave have all done." Equally important, Cromwell's heroism survived him, for the good men do lives after them.[46] On 26 August Carlyle wrote to Jane, "I have this very moment ended Oliver: hang it, he is ended thrums and all! I have nothing more to write on the subject; only mountains of wreck to burn!"[47]

There were some loose ends left to be tied up or snipped off as Carlyle saw fit. His correction of proofs was not yet finished and would continue on into his holiday in Scotland. There was also the question of the biography of Cromwell which he had hinted at often enough as the second part of his task. But it was clear Carlyle had not the heart, digestion or energy for a straight biographical account now that the compilation was finished. There

was another reason. On 15 August FitzGerald confided to his friend Bernard Barton that Carlyle "told me he had done so much for the illustration of Cromwell's letters etc. that he doubted if he should ever write any further Life of him."[48] Writing to Emerson on 29 August Carlyle admitted as much. He called the work he had done "a kind of Life of Oliver, the best that circumstances would permit me to do: whether either I or England shall be, in my time, fit for a better, remains submitted to the destinies at present."[49]

It is probable that when he first began collecting the letters Carlyle contemplated a separate biography once he was finished. He changed his mind out of weariness with his subject, and also because his "biography" of Cromwell came to be contained in the letters and their expanding annotation. And the annotation, like Tolkien's Lord of the Rings "grew in the telling." On 19 August Carlyle had written Varnhagen von Ense, "I have had a really frightful business of it with that book, which grew in my hands into rather unexpected shape." To Emerson (29 Aug. 1845) he had also written "the Book took quite an unexpected Figure in my hands."[50]

Carlyle must have expressed similar sentiments to FitzGerald, who then related them to E. B. Cowell (12(?) June 1845):

> Carlyle is very busy and in a great muddle with editing his Cromwell Letters. He meant to have illustrated them but by a few words of his own to each letter; but he finds he cannot say a little on matters so near his heart; so that the book swells to two volumes; time runs away; and the bookseller, whose contract was for Carlyle's few words, will get too many in for his bargain; . . . . . a sense of Justice, and equal balance, and fair wages for fair work, etc. is at the bottom of these scruples in him.[51]

Carlyle found he could not say better what he almost allowed Cromwell to say for himself. Further work would only prove

repetitious.

Carlyle left Chelsea on 3 September to visit his wife and later his mother at Scotsbrig.[52] He would stay there for over a month. The final proofs for Cromwell, including the "Christie Index" were received and corrected by him during this time.[53] On 6 October he wrote to John, "This day I have sat some five hours correcting an Index; the last botheration I am to have with that book of mine."[54] He returned to Chelsea on 18 October,[55] only to shortly leave again with Jane for a visit to Bay House in Alverstoke. The Barings had invited the Carlyles down for a visit that would last over a month. It was from Bay House that Carlyle wrote matter-of-factly to Jean on 26 November, "The Cromwell is coming out in London tomorrow."[56] When Baring secured a copy Carlyle commented on it briefly in a letter to John (1 Dec 1845), "It looks well enough," he said, "And now that Business, one may hope, has ended."[57]

Although the "Business" was not yet ended Carlyle was able to relax for a time and enjoy and even revel in a letter praising his work from the Rev. Alexander Scott, friend of Erskine's and former assistant of Edward Irving's. Scott received a reply (5 Dec. 1845) from Carlyle, who termed his letter the "first voice of approval" of his version of Cromwell. As was always the case it was his message that he wanted people to take to heart. If the "practical English mind" could "understand, and believe as a very fact, that it once had a Hero and Heroism in this man and his work, my poor dry bones of a compilation may prove to be a better 'Poem' than many that go by that name!"[58] The Carlyles returned to Chelsea toward the end of December.[59]

To Carlyle's surprise Cromwell proved popular. Already in early January 1846 he was planning a second edition. He wrote Emerson on the third that "some 50 or so of new (not all insignificant) Letters have turned up, and I must try to do something rational with these."[60] The book had generated such interest that many owners of Cromwell letters sent him copies, while scholars dug into archives on his behalf and others pointed out printed sources of letters Carlyle had overlooked. He decided to incorporate all of them into a new edition for the sake of thoroughness.

The course Carlyle took with the new letters was laid down in his Preface to the Second edition. Letters that tended to clarify Cromwell's statements or actions were made "new staves" in the old "cask." That is, they were inserted into the text proper, while less important yet authentic letters were included in an appendix. A rather relieved Carlyle concluded "let me beg to be allowed to consider this my small act of Homage to the memory of a Hero as finished."[61] After his normal lamentations about boring sources and slow printers,[62] the new edition was published 17 June 1846.[63] Since the First edition had been superseded so quickly Carlyle had a "Supplement to the First Edition" printed specifically for those who had purchased it. This contained the added letters and revised commentary that went into the Second edition, and was made available at "prime cost," which apparently meant at cost.[64] It was a thoughtful gesture on Carlyle's part.

A Third edition was to appear in 1849, which, except for the addition of a few new letters and the forged Squire Papers (discussed in Chapter 5) remained in all essentials unchanged from the earlier editions. For all practical purposes the important contributions

to the book ceased with the Second edition. Carlyle's own conclusion regarding Cromwell is a fit means of summing up what the book meant to him, and what he hoped for from it. To FitzGerald on 8 April 1846 he wrote:

> These Letters will most probably survive all my other Books, and my contemporaries' other Books; -- and do more good perhaps than anything I ever tried or could try in the "literary" way. That is no extravagant supposition. If they put poor mortals off that thrice accursed notion of theirs, that every clever man in this world's affairs must be a bit of a liar too, the consequences would be invaluable. A truly accursed Notion; all false too; and a "Doctrine of Devils," if there ever was one! . . . I hope to do a little towards kicking that Notion into Chaos yet: we have had quite enough of it here in the terrestrial European regions for a couple of centuries past![65]

Chapter IV

Carlyle's Reading and Research in Cromwell

The reader is often curious how the writer writes. The printed page appears polished, yet pristine: a finished product that it would have been impossible to compose in any other way. It is as if the writer simply set up his work in type and printed it. But of course, we all know such is not the case, that effortlessness in composition is a vainly sought ideal, except perhaps at the highest level of genius or the lowest province of hack-work. In all disciplines, artistic or scientific, there is more to our poor efforts at creation than grandiose gesture and a voice thundering "Let there be!"

The struggle for the proper form, the wrestling over words and sentences, and on a more basic level the need to assimilate the information he wished to write about before a proper beginning could be made, were all problems Carlyle faced in writing Cromwell. Indeed, it may well be he was never more acutely confronted by the problems of composition. For in no other work of his do we find him writing at least 400 pages of miscellaneous copy, revising much of it, then abandoning virtually all of it in favor of an altered approach to the subject. It says much for Carlyle the artist and man that he could see the inferiority of his preliminary studies, accept the fatal flaw of their approach, and choose instead Oliver Cromwell and his utterances as a unifying, vivifying theme.

Yet we are still curious. How did Carlyle prepare the ground? How did he gather information? What did he read and how well? How did he go about writing his portion of Cromwell, and what were his

guidelines in elucidating the Lord Protector's? Cromwell can be read, and the fruit of Carlyle's patient, and not so patient research admired, but what about the root system essential in nourishing the trunk and boughs that produced this fruit? As Carlyle himself wrote in another context: "Do not forget your root . . . my brothers. I have comparatively a most small value for your biggest magic-tree when the root of it is gone."[1] Before any judgment on the final version of Cromwell can be made, it is wise to follow Carlyle's advice and patiently examine the research that went into the book.

That is the initial purpose of this chapter. So far as Carlyle's working papers are available, they will be scrutinized to see what insight they give into his research methods. His books and preliminary reading will be examined, as well as his proclivity for delegation of research. Attention will be paid to his attempts to use primary sources. In later chapters the study will broaden into an analysis of his preliminary drafts and his often-frustrated attempts to write himself into a "doable" topic. Finally, an attempt will be made to relate this preliminary labour to the completed work, and so come to some conclusions about the scholarly and artistic merit of Cromwell. The present chapter and the three following it attempt to discover how good an editor, historian and artist Carlyle was.

For an examination of this sort we are extremely fortunate, since there survive more working papers and manuscripts for Cromwell than for any of Carlyle's other works. Students of Past and Present, it is true, can claim access to manuscripts in two stages of development, and the high regard in which that work is held may

give these sources some precedence. Yet the sheer variety of information available on Cromwell, plus that fact that almost none of it has been sifted gives it a certain precedence as well.

There are four libraries with substantial Cromwell-related holdings. No doubt the most complete of all Carlyle's surviving manuscripts is held in the Strouse Collection in the University of California at Santa Cruz library. This is the abandoned group of sketches that preceded Cromwell, which Alexander Carlyle edited and published under the title Historical Sketches.[2] This manuscript in its present state consists of approximately 125 leaves, all in Carlyle's hand, arranged by Alexander to form a roughly chronological history of the first four decades of the seventeenth century.

Among the Forster Manuscripts in the Victoria and Albert Museum is a bound volume of collected sketches and reading notes, including some preliminary studies and drafts for Cromwell, fragments of Past and Present, and much more draft material duplicating and predating material found in the historical sketches. Although it is the reading notes contained in Forster that will first concern us, the importance of these preliminary studies should not be underestimated in examining Carlyle's method of composition. They will be considered in chapter six.

In the National Library of Scotland there are significant holdings in the form of letters of the period, the early study titled "Gropings about Montrose," and some transcribed copies of Cromwell letters made for Carlyle by his brother John.

Finally, the Beinecke Library of Yale University contains a large accumulation of notes on Cromwell, including an extensive correspondence largely concerning information about Cromwell's

letters that took place mainly after Carlyle had published his first edition. Of equal importance are a notebook concerning Carlyle's reading on the Civil Wars, a long rough draft of Carlyle's commentary containing much unused material about Cromwell's letter of 13 October 1638 to his cousin Mrs. St. John, and drafts and unused sketches of other Commonwealth subjects. While there is no accurate count of the number of manuscripts at Yale relating to Carlyle's Cromwell there is easily more than twice as much information there than is found in the Forster MSs, which contain 180 pages of manuscript. However, not everything at Yale is in Carlyle's own hand.

These are the main repositories of manuscripts. They are extensive in scope, little used as regards Cromwell, and give Carlyleans the best opportunity they may ever have to understand how he wrote.

Yet another topic for investigation is Carlyle's marginalia in his sources. While much of Carlyle's library has been dispersed through his own generosity and the Sotheby auction after his nephew Alexander's death in 1932, a great deal has been preserved, mainly by design.[3] Carlyle always borrowed books quite freely from his friends, and during the Cromwell years from no one more freely than John Forster, literary critic, Civil War historian in his own right, and collector of one of the finest libraries of Civil War books and manuscripts ever amassed. On his death in 1876 his collection, including the books lent to Carlyle, was generously bequeathed to the nation. The collection is now somewhat shabbily held in the Victoria and Albert Museum Library.[4] Carlyle's libraries at his house in Chelsea and birthplace at Ecclefechan also contain

books obviously of use to him while writing Cromwell.[5] Yet the largest repository by far found its way into the Houghton Library of Harvard University. For it was to Harvard that Carlyle bequeathed books he possessed that he used to write Cromwell and Frederick.[6] Among his books on Cromwell available for consultation, I personally consulted about 66 titles numbering over three times as many volumes, although these books form only a fraction of the total number of sources Carlyle used.

While at times tedious, the consultation tells us much about how Carlyle read and made use of his books which were, after all, his primary sources of information. Replying to a letter from the Rev. Alexander Scott which had asked about Carlyle's methods in taking notes he wrote (5 Dec. 1846): "I universally . . . rather avoid writing beyond the very minimum; mark in pencil the very smallest indication that will direct me to the thing again."[7] This may be compared with Carlyle's comment regarding his need to make marginal notations in Mark Noble's Memoirs of the Protectoral House of Cromwell (3rd ed., London, 1787): "The reader . . . digs through it, and again through it; covers the margins of it with notes and contradictions, with references, deductions, rectifications, execrations, -- in a sorrowful, but not entirely unprofitable manner."[8] The second assessment, generally speaking, is the more accurate, especially for a source that he was to use extensively. At these times Carlyle seems always to have read pencil in hand, specific purpose in mind. When reading in preparation for a book, his main objective was to first familiarize himself with the age and its people. As his understanding deepened, and writing approached or actually involved him, his reading became more specific and

was geared to placing the facts precisely at the proper time, or so his marginalia would suggest.

A fascination for precise dating is one of the most striking aspects in his marginalia. This recurs in his finished work. Thus, he queries in the margins of Rushworth "on what days did Prynne stand in the pillory?" At another point he attempts to date letters of Cromwell's sent during the Jamaica campaign, but laments "no date, alas!" And finally, when Robert Baillie notes in his journal, "I must preach tomorrow" Carlyle identifies the day by writing "Saturday after Pym's funeral."[9] In noting this emphasis on dating one is reminded of the chapter in the Historical Sketches where Carlyle notes that Cromwell's student days at Oxford began the day Shakespeare died, and ten days after Cervantes' death.[10] This is perhaps part of his constant attempt to remind himself and the reader of the difficulty of revealing the depth of history through the linear written form.

Another tendency in the marginalia, is his cross-referencing of sources and devising of crude indexes in the margins. This is found most prominently in the sources he used for basic reference: works like Rushworth, Thurloe, and the much-maligned yet often-cited Mark Noble. The references to "see Whitelocke" or "A good narrative of all this, in Harl/ēian/ Miscel/lāny/" are quite extensive,[11] and probably formed the basis for some of the more formal pages of notes Carlyle collected on specific subjects, events or people. The marginal indexes are occasionally augmented by more formal attempts to index entire works or important sections of them. In Puritan Tracts and Sermons for example, volume eight contains Carlyle's manuscript table of contents while volume nine holds

John Christie's index to the entire set, presumably completed at Carlyle's recommendation.[12] It is easy to understand why Carlyle took the trouble, even though it must have pained him to do this busy work: it had to be done if he was to make full use of these sources. On receipt of the first two volumes of Baillie's Letters and Journals from its new editor David Laing, Carlyle had written to him asking that future volumes contain "a good copious Table of Contents, or even a general Index"; without such a reference the estimable diarist's work would be "a filled warehouse without windows or shelves."[13] While Laing complied with the request, Carlyle was not always so fortunate, judging from his exasperated (and exaggerated) sputtering at Dryasdust in Cromwell: "Surely at least you might have made an Index for these huge books!"[14]

A final aspect of Carlyle's marginalia offers more amusement and more insight into his mode of research. This concerns his editorial comments. The Rev. Mark Noble, for example, comes in for severe scarification,[15] although Carlyle's regard for the valuable material he collected but perhaps arranged haphazardly is shown by his frequent citation of Noble in Cromwell. Still, Carlyle was constantly frustrated by his disorganization, seeming inaccuracy and less heroic view of the Protector. Pointing up an apparent inconsistency Carlyle grumbles, "In what region of Tartarus do vain genealogists dwell, who are bunglers even at that!" When Noble relates one of the dreary and almost certainly untrue anecdotes of Cromwell's mis-spent youth we read, "What cursed trash, by way of 'History' of England's remarkablest practical man!" And again, Carlyle catches a Noble slip-up where the distracted minister has Cromwell wanting to see his grandson in March 1658/9 and notes "Oliver dead six months before!"[16]

Another figure who earns Carlyle's marginal ire is Archbishop Laud. Slight sympathy is shown Laud and his reformation, Carlyle calling him an "unhappy Cobweb" and ridiculing his ceremonialism. "Jonah, I find, worshipped in the whale's belly. Was his altar at the East there, thou -- unhappy ancient man!" Of the Laudian reformers Carlyle exclaims "were ever such a set of sacreligious drivellers called by the name of church before!" And there is also this: "Lepers the whole, there is no piece of history that I remember in human annals more paltry, at once detestable and ridiculous than this same. Thou wretched old-clothes man, self-deluded Pontiff-Quack!"[17] There is rather more objurgation here than Carlyle expressed in Cromwell, where he contrasts "Awful devout Puritanism" with "decent dignified Ceremonialism" maintaining "both /are/ always of high moment in this world, but not of equally high."[18] Carlyle was even capable of a charitable word about Laud himself, when he commented (in the margins) on Laud's dream of his long-dead father, "This is a very beautiful dream; almost the only trait of an affectionate heart of flesh one finds in this poor record of a hapless Pedant's history -- "[19]

The later view does show some modification, some sense of Carlyle's working out a more reasoned opinion, although there was certainly no moderation in his pursuit of a "just" interpretation of his hero. On the less significant figures of the period Carlyle expressed great openmindedness and did alter his views on occasion.[20] He had, after all, a great deal to learn about the period. As he wrote to Sterling (6 Jan. 1840) regarding his reading about Cromwell, "a man ought to separate chaff from wheat, were it with never such pain to himself, that so thousands of other persons may not have

the pain."[21] Carlyle's marginalia show him in the midst of this harvest: accumulating information, attempting to accurately picture the period and forming and sometimes modifying views. As Carlyle's knowledge increased his basic opinions became more firmly set.

It is obvious from an examination of Carlyle's books and reading regarding Cromwell that he relied heavily on printed books for his information. Taking available references from his footnotes, letters and working papers over 100 sources can be identified, though there were probably many more. His citations from Cromwell are overwhelmingly taken from primary sources including collections of documents, editions of letters and journals, and contemporary pamphlets, newspapers and biographies. On the whole his printed sources were wisely chosen; the books he relied on still form the foundation of any research on this period. But what of Carlyle's more formal research? What was his procedure when he actually attempted to collect information from his books and the other sources of which he made use?

In the already-cited letter to Rev. Alexander Scott Carlyle went into some detail regarding his more formal note-taking. He confided, "I have tried various schemes of arrangement and artificial helps to remembrance; . . . but the use of such things" depends on the individual. He confessed that his paper bags "(filled with little scraps all in pencil) have often enough come to little for me." He relied heavily on keeping "the thing you are elaborating as much as possible actually in your own living mind" rather than laid up in notes, for in writing "Only what you at last have living in your own memory and heart is worth putting down to be printed."[22]

This letter was written just after Cromwell was completed, and though undoubtedly valid for all his works, it bears especially strongly on his use of notes during it.

For purposes of this study the manuscripts held at Yale and in the Forster Collection provide the main body of source material. Of the 180 pages of manuscript found in the portion of Forster with which we are most concerned, 112 may be classified as reading notes of one sort or another. Five of these sheets are not in Carlyle's hand. The notes in Yale are more extensive, although they have the same characteristics. They range in size from full sheets of paper to half sheets, to almost insignificant scraps. Carlyle, never one to waste precious stationery, even went to the extreme of writing on used envelopes or stealing the blank side from a correspondent's letters.[23] Most of these notes are impossible to date, except on a conjectural or inferential basis. That is, from Carlyle's letters it is often roughly known when he requested a book, was seeking it, or when it actually came into his possession, and occasionally he dates books while reading them. If notes from books in these categories are found it is reasonable to assume a certain correspondence between Carlyle's dated reference to the book and his notes from it. However, this is not always safe since it does not necessarily take into account occasions when Carlyle consulted a book he did not possess but later came to own. There were times when he read books at the British Museum, took information from them and later decided he needed his own copy.

Another possibility in assigning tentative dates relates to the content of the notes. There is a rough division between

Carlyle's reading on the Civil Wars and Protectorate and the pre-war period. On this assumption notes dealing heavily with this later period can tentatively be assigned to sometime after December 1843 when Carlyle began to concentrate exclusively on Cromwell. Notes on the reign of James or Charles' dealings with their Parliaments probably pre-date this period and were written when Carlyle's focus on his topic was wider-angled. Even this is not certain since in many of Carlyle's notes it is evident that some information was added later. Most of his notes, for example, were originally taken in pen, but many of these sheets also hold interlinear notations or added commentary in pencil.[24] Obviously then, Carlyle found it necessary at times to refer to notes he had already made or add to them, which makes dating even more difficult. In sum, any date assigned to these notes must be accepted with caution without firm evidence.

It is finally worth mentioning that what notes have survived are probably a small percentage of those Carlyle actually took. He often mentions destroying or threatening to destroy large masses of papers, and this is a threat he carried out on at least one occasion. If Carlyle found it unnecessary to preserve his manuscripts, he would certainly have found it even more superfluous to keep all his working papers. Yet the fact that more working papers than drafts have survived is curious. How this came about is unknown. The best guess for explaining what is found in the Forster Collection is that Forster himself was one of Carlyle's best friends, as well as an assiduous and persistent collector of literary and historical manuscripts. He may have begged some samples of Carlyle's work, and Carlyle felt bound to comply, although

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he took care not to part with anything he did not need, or did not already have a copy of himself. Another possible explanation for Forster's possession of these drafts comes in a letter to Forster from Carlyle (1852?) that he was sending him "3 out of 5 or 6 rubbish bundles" of Cromwell material.[25] This would appear to explain how the manuscripts came to Forster. The reading notes were most likely left wafered inside the books Carlyle had borrowed from Forster, for this is one of the rather imprecise methods Carlyle used to store his information.[26] Why the Yale manuscripts survived is more difficult to conjecture. They may have made up the remaining "rubbish bundles" in Carlyle's possession, while much of the material in them concerns the second and third editions of Cromwell, and may have been retained for reference purposes. The other notes may have been among the papers Carlyle mentioned when he wrote to Emerson at the completion of the first edition of Cromwell (29 Aug. 1845): "I have tied up the whole Puritan Paper-Litter (considerable masses of it still unburnt) with tight strings, and hidden it at the bottom of my deepest repositories: there shall it, if Heaven please, lie dormant for a time and times."[27] Obviously, if Carlyle hid away this material he had no intention of burning it, even if he also had no intention of ever making use of it.

It is probable that, along with other papers, the historical sketches manuscript would also have been found in this deep repository. The actual breaking up of these related papers only came later when they were lent in part to Forster, edited by Alexander in the late 1890s and sold in the Sotheby auction of 1932 to separate institutions and individuals.[28] However, most of them are now available thanks to a variety of bequests and purchases,

and all are accessible due to the invention of the jet plane and microfilm.

At the outset, there is nothing particularly remarkable about his reading notes. They are, in fact, perfectly ordinary in most respects, idiosyncratic in few. Almost any historian could have made them. One finds they fall into several different categories. Often Carlyle can be found reading a specific book and excerpting from it. Sometimes in an excerpt Carlyle comes close to formal writing. Another common method is his attempt to build up a chronology, and to list incidents in sequence. As a somewhat more formal example of this method, there are numerous compilations which he has docketed with specific chapter-like headings, under which are listed his references. Aside from these major divisions in the working papers there are indexes, lists of various sorts, and notes written to himself, often including editorial comment on his sources.

An early dated example of Carlyle's method of excerpting is found in his notes on John Nicoll's Diary of Public Transactions, a discursive journal of Scottish affairs covering the years 1650-67. Nicoll was a resident of Edinburgh during that time, was a Writer to the Signet and a Notary public, while his Diary exhibits him as "peacable," "superstitious and credulous to excess."[29] The book is a Bannatyne Club publication edited by the ever-faithful David Laing. Excerpts Carlyle made cover both sides of two full sheets and consist mainly of seemingly random notes on unrelated subjects. Carlyle indicates a preference for the interesting anecdote as opposed to the general trends of history during the time. Here he lists information about the life of Sir John Stewart,

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first Earl of Traquair, lord high Treasurer of Scotland and Charles I loyalist in the covenanting times, then shifts to the appearance of the fanatical sect of Quakers, mosstroopers and other subjects. At the conclusion of the excerpts Carlyle dates the page "(8 Decr 1841)!" This places them in the midst of an intensive period of reading and research. One of the first opportunities for extended study Carlyle had, this came before Cromwell had assumed a dominant role in his studies. It is therefore not surprising that what Carlyle notes is discursive and disconnected. Certainly at this early stage he was reading mainly for information. Nicoll's Diary, in fact, is not cited in Cromwell.

Of greater interest is the fact that in his excerpts Carlyle gives the page number of his source when quoting, yet invariably quotes inaccurately. Also at this early stage in his work Carlyle is inconsistent over whether or not to modernise spelling or retain the old forms. He usually settles for something of both at the same time, hardly a satisfying compromise. For example, Laing records a sentence: "In thefe tymes, the Englifshe commanderis haid great refpect to juftice, and in doing executioun upone malefactouris, such as theves, harlotes, and uteris of that kynd." Carlyle's version is: "In these times (March 1652) the Eng. Commanders had great respect to justice, and in doing execution upon malefactoris, such as theves, harlotes, and otheris of that kynd."[30] Carlyle cannot fairly be blamed for simplifying, but his inconsistency is jarring. Why should he retain some archaisms while abandoning others? Technically speaking, he has quoted inaccurately, although little or no damage is done to the sense in this instance. This method of quoting is the rule for Carlyle

at all stages of his writing. The care he exercised is not what is expected of a modern scholar.

More excerpts could be examined, but most are rather technical, careful summaries of information, with the typical emphases on dates and facts, people and interesting events. One, however, is worth mentioning for what it tells of Carlyle's method of composition. For this excerpt a fairly certain date of late February 1843 may be hazarded.[31] Carlyle has taken excerpts from Stowe's Chronicle (London, 1631) on the funeral of Queen Elizabeth. The account itself is a moving one in which Stowe records the outpouring of grief this event occasioned, "the like hath not been seen or known in the memory of man." Carlyle closes his excerpt by querying "The last sovereign anybody really loved(?)"[32] But this description had so stirred Carlyle's imagination that he continued to write, now composing a beautiful farewell of his own to the departed Queen, which reads in part: "We weep for thee, and should not weep. Thou wert noble and hast left us. We march, and thou leadest us not. Rest from thy labours noble heroine, rest, rest forever. /What a strange attempt!/"[33] We have here what seems to be an example of Carlyle the artist gaining momentary sway over Carlyle the historian and patient recorder of facts. It shows how important the individual scene or isolated setting or incident could be to Carlyle. Scenes often incited him to write, and were often what he wrote about. This particular case is an example, and so was his reading of Jocelin's Chronica. Isolated incidents could also serve as a symbol for a larger truth -- the flinging of Jenny Geddes' stool being a prime example. Elizabeth's funeral procession and her subjects' spontaneous outpouring of grief were proof to

Carlyle of the passing of a wise, heroic ruler, and symbolic of the innate reverence all people have for such leadership. As regards his composition, however, the important thing is that Carlyle often wrote spontaneously, as one inspired, not always knowing where his pen or mind would take him. Thus, this brief examination of Carlyle's excerpts tells us much about the careful, critical way Carlyle read his books, as well as something about how he wrote.

This attention to detail and concern for accuracy are, unfortunately, not as apparent in the way Carlyle stored his information. While he spoke of the need to keep the subject "living" in the mind, he certainly knew that not everything could be retained there. Partially to remedy this, he devised a somewhat helter-skelter means of collecting important references and anecdotes surrounding specific topics, most of which he eventually wrote about. Information from various sources would be collected and placed under its proper heading. These docketed compilations are the most common and organized means Carlyle employed in his personal information retrieval system. Among his papers are found sheets headed "Battles," "King James's States toward London -- 1603," or "Oliver in Parliament" among many others.[34] However, the pages used are of different sizes, and it must have been impossible to keep them in any specific order. At one point we find Carlyle writing frustratedly of Worcester battle, "very lately, perhaps yesterday, I had quantities of other details, but know not at this moment in what book they are! Ach!"[35] In his attempt to list sources and details on Dunbar battle he queries "Where did I read of the 'wet shocks," and Cl's singing of a Psalm! -- Eheu!"[36]

And again on 6 June 1844 Carlyle lamented in a letter to Forster "There is not the slightest vestige of that Paper in any of my Somers volumes: Sunday gone a week I spent in a great excitement, diving for it up to the elbows and deeper amid old dusty paper-boxes, -- likewise in vain."[37] Certainly most researchers from time to time lose track of some notes, but this seems to have been a regular occurrence with Carlyle. More of a system to his storage of them would have saved him considerable wading amid his sea of sheets.

In some instances Carlyle has drawn up a chronology that is undocketed, but clearly relates to a specific event or person.[38] One list, for example, concerning the reign of King James highlights a series of social and political events of that time. These notes cover four full-sized sheets and begin with Carlyle's heading, "Excerpts from Camden's Annals of Kg James . . . a Book very nearly all dead to me." Despite this rather specific heading Carlyle draws his information from several sources besides Camden, which would indicate that he worked pen in hand with his book and writing paper in front of him, while other source books to which he found it occasionally necessary to refer were within close reach. In this chronology the main groupings of notes are taken in ink, but pencil additions further confirm his periodically updating his notes. There is still a certain attempt at accuracy in page citations, although there is no specific docket to the collection of notes itself.[39]

Carlyle's research techniques are shown further in examining a notebook he kept, now found among the Yale archives, and running to some 110 pages.[40] Dates in the book range from June 1842 to

February 1844, to a final docket assigned by Carlyle: "Old Cromwell Notebook (one of several; . . . put aside, jany 1851)." The bulk of the entries appear to have been written between June and September 1842 with one of the last regular entries in this sequence containing Carlyle's charming drawing of Cromwell's house at Ely "copied from a pencil sketch on the spot, and from memory." The drawing is merely dated September, but from letters it is known Carlyle visited Ely on 6 September.[41]

As to the remainder of the contents Carlyle's method in keeping this notebook was simply to record what of importance he had read, dividing his notes into no particular sequence or category, save that of the title of his books. There is an incomplete "index" of the contents at the end of the notebook which contains only a small number of the sources listed in the preceeding pages. It is clear, then, that for the recall of his information Carlyle needed to rely heavily on his remembering where a given list, excerpt or chronology might be. If he could not recall this his confusion would have been considerable. But once past this stage Carlyle's notes are by and large accurate, intelligible and succinct, even to the research student peering over his shoulder at private, ephemeral writing.

Other aspects of Carlyle's working papers can be briefly summarized. Frequently one finds lists and indexes. There are, for example, the extensive summaries of many of the King's Pamphlets.[42] One list was prepared by Christie and heavily annotated by Carlyle.[43] A certain amount of editorialization does creep in, although it is much less prominent than that in the marginalia. A pamphlet in the Somers Tracts (London, 1809-15;

ed. by Walter Scott) "is very carelessly done (as most of his Editions are)" while Sanderson's Compleat History of the Life and Reign of King Charles (London, 1658) was "by far the most distracted section of Chaos" Carlyle had yet read, and was incomprehensible "except as a tedious useless enigma."[44]

Tedious as it may have been and often was for Carlyle to take notes, he must have known it was essential to his task. His labor in reading about the period can almost be called unstinting, and is shown by the fact that of the printed sources Carlyle consulted in preparation for Cromwell at least 100 of the books he either read, consulted or was in some manner familiar with are not cited as references in Cromwell, but are gleaned only from a careful reading of his notes and correspondence. No doubt many others have escaped notice while some Carlyle may have inadvertently failed to cite. If there was a book available which could in the slightest way illuminate the period, offer insights on its main figures or clarify a controversial point, Carlyle would read it, provided it could be easily found by or for him. On the whole the quantity of his reading and the conscientious thoroughness of his surviving notes are impressive, while his methods of storing information were clearly crude.

Another important aspect of Carlyle's research is what one might call "fieldwork." Knowledge of his methods here will help serve as a basis for judging his accuracy and attention to detail -- both highly prized by modern scholars, and certainly fundamental for one who so loudly emphasized the primacy of facts and his own pains taken in research. It may also give some insight into the general methods a nineteenth century historian was able to employ.

The first and most striking example of Carlyle's fieldwork is how little of it he actually did himself. There is no kinder or fairer way to put it, although if we were to imagine ourselves living 140 years ago, it might make this method somewhat more understandable, or perhaps in some measure essential. Imagine this now-unthinkable world, without xeroxes, microfilm or photo-duplication of any sort. Consider life without nine tenths or more of the bibliographies, indexes, lists and source books now deemed common material in the most primitive university library. Forget about inter-library loan, readily accessible public lending libraries, or efficient staffs in the libraries that do exist. Of perhaps equal importance, efface from memory the Dewey decimal system, or the Library of Congress or British Museum catalogues. None of this existed for Carlyle. A final consideration, the importance of which is difficult to gauge, is that no one and nothing but the sales of his books underwrote the considerable expense Carlyle must have incurred in carrying out his researches, and in meeting his more mundane but equally important living expenses. There were no university grants, few government stipends or sinecures, few research assistants eager to perform the drudge work often associated with research. To the modern scholar who grumbles over a temporarily out-of-service photocopying machine, such a primitive state is scarcely imaginable. Yet it is precisely such a state which must be imagined before we can adequately picture Carlyle going about his research, and attempting to deal with such impediments that, as a matter of course, blocked his path.

These everyday limitations may in some measure explain the heavy reliance Carlyle placed on his network of friends and

acquaintances to help carry forward his work. There can be no doubt the reliance was too heavy, and that Carlyle did not always judge wisely those to whom he entrusted some of his work. But by and large, the network was made up of intelligent, well-meaning amateurs and competent professional historians who performed a best that was very good indeed. As Carlyle wrote to David Laing after having received information from Him: "forgive me . . . if I perhaps trouble you some other time with still other queries of mine. A man that knows, what is the use of him if not to instruct those that do not know!"[45]

Chief among them and undoubtedly the best qualified to render assistance was Laing. He was able to recommend many books on Scottish affairs to Carlyle, and eventually managed to unearth some scanty printed references to Jenny Geddes, which Carlyle rather over-eagerly accepted as proof of her existence.[46] In the main, Laing steered Carlyle wisely, and Carlyle in turn appreciated the assistance of a genuine scholar. Writing to him (10 Oct. 1844) after a year's break in their correspondence he hoped Laing had "accumulated a sufficient stock of patience . . . to admit of my again coming in upon /you/ with some of my Scotch difficulties," and proceeded to pepper him with queries regarding a seventeenth century highwayman called Gilderoy, an obscure Scottish lord mentioned in a Cromwell letter, and the inevitable Jenny Geddes. The letter closes with a plea for forgiveness, and a final request in the form of a postscript: where precisely was this highwayman hanged?[47]

Other figures of note performed spade and legwork for Carlyle. Some of the many friends who supplied him with books have been noted.

Even Robert Browning, who ghosted a biography of Strafford for John Forster, was pressed into service by Carlyle to secure a copy of a Cromwell letter. Carlyle wrote to Browning (21 May 1844) that the owner of the letter, one H.W. Field "seems to be a kind of fool; and I find I shall have to attack him thro' you, -- for your sins!" He went on to say Field had called at Cheyne Row at an inconvenient time, that Carlyle had responded with a "civil Note" requesting a copy of the letter. "He answers after ten days" fumed Carlyle, "seems not to understand that the Copy of Oliver's own letter . . . is the only part of his possessions that interests me; and writes . . . in a very illegible hand too, considerably like a goose. I fear unless you take him in hand, I shall have a great deal of corresponding with him yet! --" Since you and Field both have mutual friends, would you please, cajoled Carlyle, "by your dexterity, contrive to introduce some legible penman, for ten minutes, into free contact with that invaluable Autograph, and get a correct copy of it?[48] Browning did as he was bidden, only to be called to service again concerning the same letter -- a highly insignificant one, by the way[49] -- which Field himself had transcribed imperfectly: "it is full of obscurities; has no address, and one or two other dubieties" grumbled Carlyle (13 Feb. 1845). Collate my copy with the original "And above all, thank Field for me," but politely yet firmly inform him "I do not need" his services "henceforth!"[50] This incident can be interpreted variously. On the one hand it shows Carlyle conscientious in attempting to secure an accurate copy of a letter he wanted, while at the same time it finds him unwilling to take much trouble himself, and shows a somewhat ungrateful attitude towards a contributor who was probably only trying to be of help.

Similar yet far more extensive services were rendered Carlyle by Edward FitzGerald. His efforts regarding Naseby and in helping secure a copy of a letter from the Duke of Manchester have been noted. On other occasions Carlyle assigned him various tasks which he attempted to fulfill in a cheerful and thorough manner. On 3 January 1844 he wrote Carlyle of a descendant of Cromwell's who was reported to have autograph letters of the Protector's, while he had heard tell of other letters, of which he would try to secure copies.[51] The descendant, who bore the unlikely appellation of Artemidorus Cromwell Russell, turned out to be of bad reputation, and apparently without any letters. Yet in the same letter (10 Feb. 1844) in which Carlyle admitted that the Russell inquiry had been a dead-end, he also asked FitzGerald to explore Cromwell's "Lincolnshire Affairs." "If you will actually go to that quarter, and explore it with eye and mind, you will do a most acceptable feat, -- and I am now prepared with all documents for you."[52] Included in these investigations were consultations with the owners of the field, the Allenbys, who had collected battle artifacts but were nonetheless somewhat undecided as to where the battle of Winceby was fought.[53] FitzGerald eventually saw a great amount of material collected and forwarded to Carlyle by Dr. W. Cookson, a local amateur historian.[54] Carlyle, according to FitzGerald was "much pleased," as well he might have been. A goodly amount of material he would require for relating the Lincolnshire campaign, including three battles, had been collected without much bother on his part, save a few introductory and admonitory letters. As FitzGerald observed to his assistant in the investigations, Mrs. John Charlesworth, upon the completion of their joint efforts on

behalf of Carlyle: "the Allenbys have done capitally: and so have you: and so have I; and so I hope will Carlyle one day."[55]

Further assistance Carlyle received was quite extensive and continued until well after he had given up active study of Cromwell. Much of this correspondence is at Yale. While one of the letters there is dated as late as 1880, most were written between 1845-50, between the publication of Carlyle's first and third editions. They are largely from unknown individuals who became acquainted with Carlyle's research through his network of friends[56] or through the publication of Cromwell. They may fairly be called unsung heroes in the composition of the Cromwelliad, especially the later editions, which, in the quantity of information contained in them, are much better than the first. Unfortunately, in the interest of concision their efforts must largely remain unsung, although the fact of their assistance deserves mention, especially since Carlyle invariably chose not to acknowledge it.

This work falls into two categories, including the communications of Cromwell letters not previously known to Carlyle, and supplementary information which aided his elucidations. A letter from Charles Henry Cooper (9 Jan. 1846) notes with gratification, "that your new edition is called for so soon," and encloses several books, the published volumes of his own Annals of Cambridge (Cambridge, 1842-53) which included two Cromwell letters, "other transcripts & notes with reference to your various inquiries" and "Transcripts of the Letters in MS Baker." All told there are eight pages of notes which Cooper forwarded to Carlyle on this occasion. This is not at all untypical in quantity or quality of the information gathered for Carlyle by these correspondents.[57]

Another assistant, apparently William Crick, took pains to transcribe from manuscript a letter Carlyle had already printed, noting "The interlineations and erasures are accurately copied" and asking, "Should you like to see the original letter?" Crick gave the new provenance of the autograph, which was different from that reported in the Supplement, but Carlyle never bothered to make this slight alteration.[58]

The contributions of two other correspondents proved to be of great significance. The Rev. John Edleston, "Fellow of Trinity,"[59] assisted Carlyle by telling him of the whereabouts of three letters from Cromwell to Lord Wharton. He had located them a cupboard in the Fitzwilliam Museum.[60] The correspondent almost hesitantly offered further information. "I do not perceive," he wrote (23 Feb. 1848), "that you have given all the correspondence between Oliver & the authorities at Kilkenny in March 1650 which preceded the reduction of the place." He then cited a London pamphlet of the same year[61] which was among the King's Pamphlets, and which Edleston had correctly "perceived" Carlyle had missed.[62] This pamphlet alone added six Cromwell letters and confirmed a seventh for the third edition, not counting the replies of the governor of Kilkenny, which Carlyle also printed. In his notes to the text, Carlyle does not thank his informant, but rather coldly cites the relevant pamphlet without further comment.

Even these and other contributions[63] must blanch before the efforts of John Langton Sanford, whose first letter may speak for itself. Sanford began by maintaining his interest "in the character of Oliver Cromwell" and went on to say he had in 2 years' time collected as many letters of the Protector's as he could "in

order to draw . . . some surer conclusions regarding his conduct." "The publication of your last work" he went on "has led me again to the Subject, & I find upon a comparison, that while your Volumes contain about 24 letters which are new to me, they do not contain about 70 which I have perused. My sources of information are so limited & commonplace, that I was led to think, you must have . . . particular reason for this omission, but" that seems hardly likely.[64] This was not all. In future letters he included information about the battle of Gainsborough, a "List of omitted letters" which gives 31 letters and documents (and may, as a result, be incompletely preserved), an eight page list of corrections and observations on the first edition giving more thorough sources and more correct versions of letters, and information regarding the existence of Cromwell's "Irish Declaration." And again, incredible as it may seem, nowhere in later editions of Cromwell does Carlyle acknowledge the assistance of this man, who singlehandedly provided him with virtually his entire second edition and offered constructive information that would greatly improve his first.[65]

One scarcely knows how to respond to this startling series of letters, except by letting them speak for themselves. It seems fair to say that it is no longer a question of Carlyle making the best possible use of his network of correspondents in order to compensate for the crude research tools available to him, but rather of his being, if not downright lazy, then careless, unscholarly and a good deal less assiduous than he claimed.

One further person deserving mention is Carlyle's paid research assistant Dr. John Christie. What little is known of Christie comes from scanty references in Carlyle's letters or notes of

instruction, and from the comments of David Masson and Francis Espinasse. As previously noted, he was apparently engaged in late September 1844 on Masson's recommendation. Christie, a young, recently-qualified physician needed work, and Carlyle, "whose visits to the British Museum for material . . . were becoming intolerably irksome" needed someone to copy extracts and carry out research.[66] He retained his position probably until publication of the second edition of Cromwell,[67] whereupon Carlyle, impressed with his industry, worked hard to find him a more permanent post. A position was found but in a tragic set of circumstances Christie's wife died in 1846 or '47, and he soon followed her to the grave, both of them victims of consumption.[68]

Christie's work for Carlyle was mainly that of a scribe. In one note that has survived and can reasonably be dated to the spring of 1845[69] Carlyle requests Christie to check in the Sloan manuscripts of the British Museum that some references to letters already copied are correct. At another point in the note Carlyle admits he has come up against a stone wall in searching for a Cromwell letter detailing the "King's Escape from Hampton Court." "I cannot find it anywhere. Try at the Museum."[70] This letter may well have been found by Christie, although the source Carlyle cites in Cromwell is the much maligned Rushworth, a book he used extensively and probably had in his Chelsea study. Another request made on this sheet was for specific extracts from Whitelocke. Carlyle went to the length of listing the page number, column, and beginning and concluding words of the passages he wanted, which confirms a conclusion that he was usually quite specific in his instructions and did not give Christie a loose rein in attempting to locate other letters.

Another example shows us what kind of work Christie did, and gives some hint of its quality. Much of his time appears to have been taken up in preparing an abstract of the Sir Symonds D'Ewes Journals of the Long Parliament. The abstract Christie prepared, along with Carlyle's comments on almost every sheet of notes taken totals about 450 pages of manuscript.[71] Christie has written a day-by-day summary of D'Ewes' notes, occasionally quoting choicer anecdotes. Yet his summaries are sometimes inaccurate or incomplete, leaving out many of the events discussed in a given day. For example, in the entry for 20 February 1640/1 Christie has written as his summary, "A long speech by D'Ewes on the subject -- he recommends borrowing money from the treasury for building St. Pauls." In fact, D'Ewes' long speech dealt with the levying of subsidies for the relief of the northern counties. His reference to St. Paul's had nothing to do with borrowing money to build it, but borrowing money from its treasury to use in the north: "it was most fitt wee should borrow some of that, seeing it weere better for those dead stones to lie awhile unimploied, than for soe manie living Christians to bee endangered for want of monie."[72] Christie's account, therefore, entirely misstates the nature of the debate, and according to John Forster, himself an editor of D'Ewes, this is by no means an isolated incident. This Christie abstract was given to Forster, probably some time in the 1850s. He attempted to make use of it in his own researches but found on comparing it with the original, "it proved to be so entirely imperfect and deficient even as an index to the larger collections, that there was no alternative but to begin the research anew."[73]

Obviously Christie's previous medical training had given him no background in English history or proper methods of editing

manuscripts. His practice shows his ability was limited. Although Carlyle said "he could not have had an abler assistant for such work, or a more trustworthy,"[74] clearly he could easily have found someone better qualified.[75]

Well-served or not Carlyle was well-satisfied with Christie's services, and had better reason to feel the same way about the efforts made by others on his behalf. Our uneasiness stems precisely from the fact that he was so well-served by others, and that so many common, easily accessible letters escaped his notice and had to be provided by others. One cannot help feeling concerned that he relied so heavily on his chain of correspondents, because he himself appears to have been among its weaker links. This uneasiness is only confirmed by the distance Carlyle often placed between himself and the information he needed to ensure the accuracy of his work. And it can only compound the confirmed uneasiness to note the irritability often bordering on contempt that Carlyle sometimes expressed for the well-meaning correspondents carrying out requests for him. One senses a genuine reluctance on Carlyle's part to involve himself in first-hand research. Therefore it is worth determining exactly what Carlyle himself did attempt to perform in this aspect of investigation and assess how well he succeeded at it. As the great Civil War historian Samuel Rawson Gardiner has phrased it, "To one seeking further knowledge two lines of inquiry present themselves -- first the examination of new evidence, and secondly the critical sifting of evidence which has long been before the world."[76]

In defining what is meant by primary research the difference between primary and secondary sources should first be noted. The

former are materials contemporary with the period to which they refer, the latter are in some sense compiled interpretations of the period studied. In the case of the Civil Wars the Parliamentary History, Common Journals, Rushworth, Thurloe, Baillie's Letters and Journals and others would be classified as primary, and they are all sources about which Carlyle complained as heavily as he drew upon them. Yet consultation of printed primary sources is not quite the same as primary research, which would involve use of the manuscript itself. Primary research means actually entering the musty archives of libraries, or dusty garrets, or dank cellars, and trying to make some sense of the papers there deposited. Without question the process is time-consuming: the consultation must often occur under annoying restrictions, while the information derived is often meager in relation to the effort expended. Yet primary research is the foundation of accurate history: without it no superstructure can be built.

Froude spoke glowingly of Carlyle researches, calling his workmanship "sound to the core He spared himself no trouble in investigating; and all his effort was to delineate accurately what he had found."[77] Another writer proudly asserted "minute research" to be a "striking and conspicuous feature" in all Carlyle's works, and called his "painstaking care" in Cromwell "above all praise."[78] A more considered view, based on an actual study of Carlyle's research, and not merely accepting what Carlyle himself said about it, is that his efforts, while notable in some respects, are hardly infinitely praiseworthy, and are in no sense deserving of the effusive paeans accorded them. There is a decided tendency on Carlyle's part to avoid manuscript sources

whenever possible, while he himself admitted his "impatience of manuscript."[79]

For Cromwell Carlyle did make inquiries into several archives, but did not make extensive use of any of them. This may well be due to the slight value he felt they had for his purposes, rather than a lack of a desire to be thorough. One instance of these efforts has been noted. It was through Lord Monteagle that Carlyle gained awareness of and access to the State Paper Office, which he hoped might contain letters Cromwell wrote to the Speaker of the House of Commons during the Civil Wars. In his original request for access to these archives Carlyle took an expansive view of the records. In researching this period, he began, "one important set of original documents . . . the Records namely of the City of London, do not appear to have ever been consulted, much less investigated and examined." Carlyle went on to sketch the importance of London to the success of the struggle. "It gradually becomes manifest" he asserted "that London was little less preponderant and incessantly momentous in our English revolution than Paris was in that of the French." Carlyle concluded "The Records of such a City in such a Period ought to be made available to History." Though he said his purpose in consulting the records was "extremely hypothetical" he certainly was primarily interested in finding Cromwell letters.[80]

Probably some time shortly after permission to consult the records came (4 April 1844)[81] Carlyle attempted to take advantage of the offer. Some notes he made survive. One, typical for Carlyle gives a list of the contents of the State Paper Office, including the various committees of the House of Commons, and the volumes in

in which their records were to be found. At one point, he came across information rather more important for his purposes and noted that in a specific volume "is to be found a Letter to Cromwell from Comee of Both Kingdoms . . . to get over into the Association . . . and watch the King -- 28 May 1645."[82] Carlyle does not cite this information in Cromwell, neither does he appear to notice the other notices of letters and actual letters from Cromwell contained in the State Paper Office. A brief summary of a letter of his contained in the records of the Committee of Both Kingdoms requesting funds for the payment of his troops escaped Carlyle's notice, as did other reports of letters similarly addressed.[83] Certainly Carlyle did not in any thorough way examine the State Paper Office records. In none of the surviving notes on these manuscripts is there any hint that he spent a significant amount of time surveying them.[84] Indeed, he cites from them only three times in Cromwell.[85] Still, we need not be too hard on Carlyle for some lack of thoroughness in this instance, since these records were voluminous and uncatalogued. Even today no sane historian, even one well-acquainted with the period, would plunge immediately into these records without first consulting the imperfect catalogue now available.[86] As far as these records are concerned, Carlyle recognized their importance to history, and realized the scholarly attention they deserved, but was not himself willing to expend much effort on them.

Other attempts at primary research came in Carlyle's use of the manuscripts in the British Museum. Here his consultations, in person and through his brother John and Dr. Christie, were more extensive and show him in a slightly more favorable light.

This library in the early nineteenth century is usually described as an unearthly place to work. For someone of Carlyle's delicate nervous system it must have bordered on the hellish. Francis Espinasse, a subaltern at the Library in the 1840s recalled with no small horror the conditions of the reading room when Carlyle worked there. Available assistants were few, the new catalogue being compiled under Keeper Panizzi's direction was pervaded with "absurdity," while the old one was "almost chaotic" so full was it of "perplexing cross-references and of innumerable interlineations, made in an attempt to produce something like alphabetical sequence."[87] In addition, Carlyle himself found the reading room over-crowded, noisy and badly ventilated.[88] Distracting though this was, Carlyle often went there to consult printed books, the King's Pamphlets and occasionally manuscripts.

An example of Carlyle's research during this period not directly related to Cromwell but growing out of those studies was his discovery of the D'Ewes Manuscripts within the Harleian manuscript collection. On 20 February 1843 Carlyle notes having taken initial extracts from the papers of Sir Symonds D'Ewes,[89] learned antiquarian and lawyer, known today for his scrupulously accurate Journal of the Long Parliament, of which he was a member until Pride's Purge. Eventually these and subsequent notes and elucidations became the article "An Election to the Long Parliament," although the circumstances that led Carlyle initially to the British Museum and to the D'Ewes manuscripts at a time when he was still at work on Past and Present are unknown.

Once Carlyle had a large amount of primary material before him, his treatment of it proved typical. He temporarily forgot

about it. It was not until late July of 1844 that Carlyle made further efforts to obtain extracts from these manuscripts, at which time the unknown "dishonest-minded" Scotsman made them, or as Carlyle referred to it in the article, "Some opportunity for getting these poor old Documents copied into modern hand . . . chanced to arise."[90] Thus Carlyle had little part in copying these manuscripts, while additionally much of the elucidative material for the extracts printed came from the Suffolk historian, D. E. Davey. In his notes to the article Carlyle refers to "Dryasdust MSS," meaning material supplied by Davey. At the beginning of the article he also acknowledged experiencing Davey's "obliging disposition," whatever that means.[91] After the appearance of the article Carlyle wrote to FitzGerald (26 Oct. 1844), who had acted as a liaison between the two historians, and again rather haughtily referred to his generous source. "You may depend on it," he said, "Dryasdust is highly gratified with the notice taken of him." FitzGerald took umbrage at this label, and in a notation to Carlyle's letter wrote that Davey "had collected over 80 folios of Suffolk History, which he finally bequested to the British Museum. He supplied Carlyle (at my request) with all the particulars he wanted about an Election . . . and -- was thanked in print under the name of 'Dryasdust.'"[92] Although at least Davey was, after a fashion, thanked in print, he himself was not entirely pleased with Carlyle's manner either. He wrote, "Tho' he apparently pays me a complement in the note p. 381 it is evidently accomplished by a sneer, which is repeated, when he quotes my information under the title of Dryasdust MSS. His manner, however, of writing, is so quaint & queer, that he may not have meant anything uncivil."[93]

Uncivil or not, it is clear from this episode that Carlyle had rather less to do with either the copying or the editing of the D'Ewes' manuscripts he saw fit to publish than might commonly have been thought.

Yet Carlyle does deserve credit for what efforts he made, and a subsequent editor of D'Ewes has written that from these manuscripts Carlyle, "John Forster, and J. L. Sanford, the new school of Civil War historians, built a solid structure of comment, studies, and monographs." Before "Carlyle began turning over the folios of D'Ewes in the British Museum" the less reliable Whitelocke, Clarendon and Rushworth were the period's main sources.[94] Also in Carlyle's favor was his desire for the judicious editing and general publication of the D'Ewes manuscripts, whose importance to the history of the Long Parliament he recognised. At the conclusion of his article he asked rhetorically "Why none of the Dryasdust Publishing Societies . . . has gone into these D'Ewes's Mss in an efficient spirit and fished-up somewhat of them?"[95]

Aside from this brush with primary material, Carlyle had little to do with actual manuscripts in the British Museum, although many about Cromwell were accessible. He did visit the reading room regularly, but mainly for printed books or to advise Christie. In Carlyle's examination before the commissioners of the library he was asked if he "ever had occasion to consult any manuscripts" within the library. His response: "Not very often."[96]

What evidence we have bears this out. Carlyle's working papers heavily emphasize references to books or the King's Pamphlets, and are often instructions to Christie. References to manuscripts are infrequent. One list of queries headed "At the Museum" has answers

listed in Carlyle's own abbreviated script. "Found it in Balfour" or "indubitably old (K.P. Indexes." Another vague question "About the Levellers" is given the equally vague indication where the answer might be found: "Pamphlet in 1648 . . . of persons digging the ground --"[97] Instructions to Christie were to different sources concentrating on printed books, yet occasional references to manuscripts indicate Carlyle had some awareness of the extent of the library's holdings.[98]

Another source found in the British Museum Library, though not manuscript, is cited with some frequency by Carlyle. This is the King's Pamphlets, a priceless series of pamphlets collected from 1640 to 1663 by George Thomason, bookseller. His simple procedure was to collect almost every pamphlet or newspaper as it was published, arrange them in chronological order and according to size, and bind them together. He did this throughout the two decades of Civil Wars, Commonwealth and Restoration. After passing through several hands the collection came to the attention and ultimately into the possession of that inestimable bibliophile George III, who donated them to the recently-founded British Museum in July 1762. At the time of their tally in 1908 there were 2,008 bound volumes numbering 22,255 documents.[99]

Carlyle valued this source of information more highly than any other he consulted in his research. This is evident from extracts from the pamphlets in his notes, in instructions to Christie to consult them, and in limited attempts made at abstracting some of the pamphlets.[100] The rather large number of notes surviving on the King's Pamphlets indicates Carlyle took greater pains with them than with other sources, no doubt because he

recognized their exceptional importance. "I consider them to be the most valuable set of documents connected with English history;" he said, "greatly preferable to all the sheepskins in the Tower, and other places, for informing the English what the English were in former times. I believe the whole secret of the seventeenth century is involved in that hideous mass of rubbish there."[101] That this "most valuable set of documents" in all of English history could in the same breath be characterized as a "hideous mass of rubbish" certainly says something about Carlyle's ambivalence to manuscripts and primary research generally. In examining his attempts to use these documents we see the limitations to research imposed by the time in which he lived, as well as his own personality.

Carlyle was initially hampered in his reading of the pamphlets by the Library's regulations governing their use. These required him to consult the "chaotic" catalogue and list the proper pressmark of the volume he sought. This catalogue was the one Thomason had devised himself and although tolerably well organized was still in manuscript and contained no overall index to the collection. With some justification he maintained he "ought to have been allowed to sit down beside" the pamphlets with his own amenuenses "and to have turned from one pamphlet to the other, and to have got everything searched in that way. I consider it a great pity that that is not done with respect to those pamphlets on the Civil War." Carlyle's solution to the annoyance of this research was, for him, typical: "I hired a clerk to go there and read them; I trained him to go and search out in these pamphlets answers to inquiries I made."[102] In Cromwell the pamphlets are cited occasionally,[103]

although in terms of the number of citations their importance is a good deal less than that of printed books, while the actual consultation of the pamphlets, as Carlyle himself said, was often undertaken by Christie. It is strange that Carlyle valued them so highly, yet used them so seldom.

Slight as his use of manuscripts was he had access to several collections in the British Museum including the Sloan, Lansdowne, Harleian and Additional collections. His notes to Cromwell do occasionally list other sources from Cambridge, Paris or Dublin,[104] but the letters ascribed to these locations and from other sources farther afield certainly came from printed sources or correspondents who had access to the originals. There is, in fact, no evidence showing that Carlyle at any time traveled anywhere outside London for the purpose of viewing the manuscripts he so eagerly sought to collect. At the same time, his consultation of those available to him can only be described as inconsistent, incomplete and unscholarly. In a word, sloppy.

In making such a statement in the teeth of Froude and others, who, whatever their verdict on Carlyle's opinions were always willing to concede his caring attention to detail, perhaps a brief description of my own methods in coming to such a determination would be in order. Briefly, I attempted to put myself in Carlyle's position, by making use of the reference materials he had available to him. These consisted almost entirely of the catalogues of manuscripts in the above-cited collections, prepared in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries,[105] all of which have, by the way, yet to be superseded. From this point the procedure was straightforwardness itself. Consulting the indexes to these

catalogues, I listed the references to Cromwell, taking special note of entries specifically docketed "Letters." All such entries relating to Cromwell were then compared with the contents of Carlyle's first edition to see if he had noted all that was available. The startling and simultaneously saddening answer is that he did not.

To give some examples from the Sloan manuscripts: on page 192 of volume one of the catalogue are found eight letters and one order, easily identifiable by the headings given there. Of these nine items specifically ascribed to Cromwell only six are found in Carlyle's first edition, with one of the six being misdocketed. Two letters to Fairfax are not included until the third edition, while an order to Gualter Frost finds no place in any of Carlyle's editions.[106] Turning to page 193 of the same catalogue the record is somewhat better, for of the seven Cromwell items there Carlyle has printed six. One order to Thurloe never makes an appearance in Carlyle's pages. Another letter to the Rev. John Cotton, a New England minister has as its source the unlikely publication the "New-York Evangelist" for February 1845, though the autograph was in the Sloan collection. It was not until Carlyle's second edition that the manuscript source was referred to.[107]

Further examples of inexplicable oversights and omissions exist. Letters to the cities of Bremen and Venice are never used, a letter of the Protector's to his son is not found until the third edition, while another to William Lockhart, Cromwell's Ambassador to France, comes only in the Supplement.[108] The final instance to be cited regards a letter that did find its way

into the first edition: the first letter of the collection, from Cromwell to Mr. Storie, dated 11 January 1635/6. For his source Carlyle used a printed book, and footnotes petulantly: "This Letter, for which Harris, in 1761, thanks 'the Trustees of the British Museum,' is not now to be found in that Establishment; 'a search of three hours through all the Catalogues, assisted by one of the Clerks,' reports itself to me as fruitless."[109] First note Carlyle took no active part in this search. Actually, the difficulty in locating the manuscript came not from the fact that it did not exist, or was missing, but from a slightly misleading catalogue section headed "Autographs" while the specific entry is headed "The Album of Philip Vernat. This book contains also many arms and seals, and amongst them, the writing of . . . Oliver Cromwell, &c." The catalogue index correctly lists the page under its reference to "Cromwell," and it is stated in the entry that Cromwell-related material will be found there, although letters are not specifically mentioned.[110] The point to be derived from this is that neither Carlyle nor Christie made a systematic or in any way thorough sweep through the catalogue in their search for letters. While such a procedure would have been time-consuming, it was also the only possible way to assure thoroughness. It would certainly have been more efficient to check all possible entries carefully once, rather than incompletely dip into the catalogue on many separate occasions.

It may be thought some of Carlyle's omissions were intentional, and allowance might be made for this, especially in the case of more technical or official state papers to which Cromwell merely appended his signature. Yet Carlyle does include some items of

this sort in his first edition,[111] and it is worth remembering his own dictum on the compilation: "Accordingly, whatever words authentically proceeding from Oliver himself I could anywhere find yet surviving, I have here gathered; and . . . offer them to the reader"[112] (emphasis added).

One would almost think Carlyle never looked at this catalogue so frequent are his gaps. However, Carlyle did use the Sloan manuscripts catalogue and notes he made on the contents survive.[113] In his list Carlyle briefly cites the catalogue page number, and the number of letters to be found there, but he has in some instances not even counted correctly the number of entries per page,[114] while some of the letters listed on this sheet are not found in the first edition.[115] Indeed, throughout this brief list Carlyle's "impatience of manuscript" is evident in his incomplete listings and eager citation of printed sources for many of the letters he has listed from the catalogue. "This last I do not find in Thurloe," "Not at present to be found in Thurloe; yet possibly there," "printed in Harris," and "Harris, I think" and similar comments pepper the list. It would seem Carlyle wanted to avoid consulting any manuscript if at all possible.[116]

Looking more briefly at other manuscript collections, Carlyle found all the letters there were to be found in the Lansdowne manuscripts. The five letters there do all appear in his first edition.[117] Yet the same tendency to nod occurs with the Harleian manuscripts where three items (one letter and two orders) do not appear until the third edition, while another letter is first found in the Supplement.[118] A final example reveals Carlyle at his most bizarre, and concerns his use of the manuscripts at Oxford,

mainly held in the collection known as the Tanner manuscripts. Of course Carlyle never personally consulted these archives, and all the information in the 33 citations he makes to Tanner/Oxford collections come either from printed sources or correspondents. Only one of these letters found its way complete into the first edition, the information for it coming from Caulfield. This is the more surprising since 19 of these letters were printed in Cary's Memorials of the Great Civil War in England (London, 1842), a book which Carlyle had had on loan from John Forster. Forster's copy contains Carlyle's marginalia, including a date of December 1841.[119] Thus while Carlyle used the book about two years before he began his own collection of letters he did not recall the many Cromwell letters contained in it. This is an unpleasant commentary on Carlyle's memory, often mentioned as prodigious, his note-taking and particularly his general method of research, especially his inconsistent use of readily accessible manuscripts and printed books central to his purpose in Cromwell.

In concluding it is evident that the Carlyle who demanded good indexes was unable to utilize them thoroughly, the Carlyle with the self-imposed task of collecting Cromwell's letters was unwilling to travel any distance to copy them, and the Carlyle damning the work of his predecessors was incapable of bettering their standards of thoroughness. Much of this is not evident from consulting the standard edition of Cromwell in the Centenary Edition, because it presents Carlyle's final word on the subject, and allowed him time to fill in most of the chinks and gaps in the narrative, compilation and citations of sources. Most of the letters added in the later editions were, quite reasonably,

inserted into the body of the text without comment to that effect. To the modern reader it appears as if they were all always there. This is by no means the case. The first edition contains 157 letters and 17 speeches. The Supplement adds 53 letters and one speech, while the appendix to the supplement includes 39 items in 15 appendices, making a total of 210 letters in the second edition, not counting the appendix. The third edition has 225 letters, 18 speeches, and 19 appendices comprising 50 items. Finally, the Centenary Edition has the same number of letters and speeches in the body of the work but has now 32 appendices including 75 entries and one speech. Obviously Carlyle continued to add to his book long after active work on it had been concluded. The change from the first to the third editions is most dramatic, seeing the number of citations of Cromwell documents increase by seventy per cent. Knowing this it is curious to read Carlyle's preface to the third edition, in which he deprecates the importance of the later additions and continues: "it may be said that the new Contributions to any Edition have been slight; that, for learning intelligibly what the Life of Cromwell was, the First Edition is still perhaps as recommendable a Book as either of its followers."[120] It is a deceptive statement, for Carlyle was referring to his interpretation of Cromwell, not the collection of documents themselves. He probably did feel the first edition best expressed the essence of Oliver, while the corpulence of the later editions might excite tedium and prove a barrier to the reader's understanding.

It seems this idea of understanding is central to Carlyle's method in research. He read widely and chose good sources. Yet one feels that before he had gone very far in this course of study

his mind was already made up about what the period meant, and how its leading figures and events were to be viewed. He understood, or thought he did, and saw it as his obligation to make everyone else understand as he did. Further study only confirmed his convictions. Carlyle's inquiry was not objective in the sense that he suspended judgment to the greatest extent possible until his information had been collected, for the basic judgment of Cromwell preceded most of his research, and was more a result of insight than research in the first place. Further study in this respect proved an unnecessary burden, just as the contributions of further letters in subsequent editions were "slight" in Carlyle's eyes. They were "slight" because they altered nothing of the original interpretation, which in turn had a molding influence on what Carlyle allowed himself to learn from his reading and research. The logic here is somewhat circular. One sees Carlyle falling prey to his own interpretation and writing solely with the intent to justify it.

This chapter has attempted to examine Carlyle's reading and research to assess in some measure how careful and thorough it was. Clearly in most instances Carlyle was not as involved in it as he should have been. His use of sources was often careless or haphazard. His delegation of work without proper acknowledgment was at best ungracious, at worst plagiaristic. His "impatience of manuscript" must shock even his most ardent readers. On the whole, the methods Carlyle employed do not reflect well on him Lack of thoroughness can never be considered a virtue.

Still, it is worth keeping in mind that in his research Carlyle's desire to understand Cromwell was paramount. Properly

understood history, after all, was instructive, didactic, moral. Carlyle wrote that Cromwell's letters were "profitable for reproof, for encouragement, for building-up in manful purposes and works"[121] Just as Cromwell's life had to be understood before its example could profit modern readers the same was true of Cromwell's letters and speeches. In fact, as Carlyle discovered, they were the prime means of understanding Cromwell's life. Carlyle's editorial method, like his research, reflects the same need to understand properly before interpreting properly, and is the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter V

Carlyle as Editor

Having examined Carlyle's research the way is now cleared for a consideration of his editorial method. For in Cromwell Carlyle's treatment of the 225 letters and seventeen speeches, including his faithfulness to texts, and the extent and nature of his emendations, is basic to any judgment of the book, since supplemented by his commentary, they are the book.

His only extended portion of continuous narrative comes in his "Introduction" which runs to 84 pages; yet even here he is dealing with different subjects, related of course, but not sewn together with the needle and thread of narrative art. In the "Introduction" one finds Carlyle discussing previous biographies of Cromwell and his genealogy and early life. There is a section on the way the letters have been edited and "Dryasdust" is given a severe tongue-lashing. In the body of the work there are fairly frequent passages of historical background which Carlyle found it necessary to insert but these do not run to longer than an average chapter in length. Since so much of Cromwell is an exercise in editing, its merit must partly rest on how well this job was done.

In view of this the task of the editor as Carlyle conceived it should be defined. Before passing judgment on his conception we should judge his effort in the light of it. Briefly, what theory of method did Carlyle bring to his task, and how well did his finished product illustrate the theory? That modern methods of editing at variance with those Carlyle employed exist, and

similarly that modern thought about editing, also at variance with Carlyle's exists, are important considerations, but for the moment, irrelevant. This need to define editing is an attempt to re-insert Carlyle and his book into their own time, and a desire to understand Carlyle's aims, motivations and methods. It is an attempt, in a small way, to write history, which Carlyle himself readily admitted was a perilous enterprise. "For Editors, as for others," he once remarked, "there are times of perplexity, wherein the cunning of the wisest will scantily suffice his own wants, to say nothing of his neighbours."[1]

An inital examination of Carlyle's writings, especially the early essays "On History," "On History Again," and "Biography" shows that he felt the function of editor to be an exalted one, related in many important ways to that of historian or biographer. Since history subsumed all other disciplines it was quite naturally the most important, profitable and fundamental course of study one could undertake. "For, strictly considered, what is all Knowledge too but recorded Experience, and a product of History."[2] Simultaneously, it was impossible to perfect, since perfect history required a perfect understanding of all the aspects of the study -- an understanding which no one has, or will ever possess.

> let any one who has examined the current of human affairs, and how intricate, perplexed, unfathomable, even when seen into with our own eyes, are their thousandfold blending movements, say whether the true representing of it is easy or impossible. Social Life is the aggregate of all the individual men's Lives who constitute Society; History is the essence of innumerable Biographies. But if one Biography, nay, our own Biography, study and recapitulate it as we may, remains in so many points unintelligible to us; how much more must these million?[3]

And again, Carlyle writes, "Truly, if History is Philosophy teaching by Experience, the writer fitted to compose History is hitherto an unknown man. The Experience itself would require All-knowledge to record it."[4]

Still, it is the duty of the historian to try, to fight the good fight, to become, if not a perfect man understanding all, then at least a Renaissance man comprehending much. As his knowledge and wisdom grow, so will the universality and value of his history. Yet in writing history under the guidance of such an expansive definition there was another essentially editorial problem. Carlyle explains: "in all historic elections and selections, the maddest work goes on. The event worthiest to be known is perhaps of all others the least spoken of: nay, some say, it lies in the very nature of such events to be so. ... Truly, in these times, the quantity of printed publication that will need to be consumed with fire, before the smallest permanent advantage can be drawn from it, might fill us with astonishment, almost with apprehension."[5] At another point in the same essay ("On History Again") Carlyle proclaims "History, then, before it can become Universal History, needs of all things to be compressed. Were there no epitomising of History, one could not remember beyond a week."[6] Though time and nature are editors themselves, causing "a certain fitness of selection,"[7] it is obvious the historian must assume the same role. The "ever-living, ever working Chaos of Being" is what "the historian will depict, and scientifically gauge . . . by threading it with single lines of a few ells in length!"[8] In depicting the "Chaos of Being," or what more mundane men would call life, the historian is faced with an impossible task that should, nonetheless,

be "unweariedly" prosecuted. If we cannot know all, we can at least acknowledge our limitations and know that "much still remains to be interpreted; that History is a real Prophetic Manuscript, and can be fully interpreted by no man." Thus it was the historian's task to "edit" the Chaos of Being into some cosmos of being.[9] Somehow he needed to discern the essential details of his subject from the mass of useless or irrelevant information that confronted him.

The biographer's duty was similar. "Wherever there is a Man, a God also is revealed, and all that is Godlike: a whole epitome of the Infinite, with its meanings, lies enfolded in the Life of every Man." The true biographer would discern in his subject "this same Godlike" and "unfold it for us."[10] This again is primarily an editorial task that can only be imperfectly completed because every man is a mystery to himself as well as other men. Yet the inspired biographer senses some glimmer of the godlike in the devil-man and causes others to see this as well. Since all men are works of God and possess this immutable spark, the accurate representation of a single man is in some respects the proper representation of mankind. Carlyle clung to this idea of the divinely inspired man and universe throughout his life. In the Latter-Day Pamphlets we find sentiments congruent to those expressed in the essays written 20 years before:

> All History . . . is an inarticulate Bible; and in a dim intricate manner reveals the Divine Appearances in this lower world. For God did make this world, and does forever govern it; the loud-roaring Loom of Time, with all its French revolutions, Jewish revelations, 'weaves the vesture thou seest Him by.' There is no Biography of a man, much less any History, or Biography of a Nation, but wraps in it a message out of Heaven, addressed to the hearing ear or to the not-hearing.

> What this Universe is, what the Laws of God are, the Life of every man will a little teach it you.[11]

Biography has become history, and vice versa, mainly through the author's sincerity, insight and judicious use of editing.

Carlyle's conception of the role of historian and biographer is unique to him. In an abstract sense the inspired historian may gain more adherents. Most people would concede, for example, that history can be instructive, that it should teach people how to avoid the mistakes of the past. However,few writers would dare claim that true history is a "message out of Heaven." At the risk of irreverence the closest parallel to it is Moses descending Sinai with the Tables of the Law in the crook of his arm, exhorting the Children of Israel to heed them. But how does this idea of the historian help us define Carlyle's idea of the editor and his function? To begin with, there are the noted "editorial" aspects to the historian's role. He must select from a huge mass of information, edit out what is useless or unworthy, and in what remains reveal some truth. In addition, some of the glamor and prestige Carlyle assigned to the historian carried over to the traditionally more humble task of the editor. Presenting documents to the public was an instructive and useful task. The editor did not merely reprint the documents but revealed the truth in them, their divine element. And this truth, whether offered by historian, biographer or editor, was still truth, and to be duly reverenced. Obviously any writer who sought to represent truth by whatever means needed wisdom enough to distinguish it from falsehood. Carlyle tended to view this need to distinguish between truth and falsehood as an editorial function.

Today an editor can serve in different ways. He may select memorable passages from a writer's complete works. He can publish documents as little changed as possible. He may edit his material through modernizing spelling and punctuation. In what is perhaps the most common procedure and, on the face of it closest to Carlyle's method in Cromwell, the editor may also give a text with explanatory comment. In thinking over these methods of editing, none of them does full justice to what Carlyle was trying to do, because none has such an elevated ultimate purpose in mind. The more-or-less orthodox modern view of the editor as one who establishes an accurate text and provides relevant notes is far different from Carlyle's idiosyncratic conception.

In looking at many of Carlyle's works it is evident he carried this idea with him through them. In Sartor Resartus he acts as the fictional editor of something like his memoirs. In Past and Present Carlyle writes, just prior to introducing the heroic Abbott and his faithful chronicler Jocelin, "Certainly, could the present Editor instruct men how to know Wisdom, Heroism, when they see it, that they might do reverence to it only, and loyally make it ruler over them, -- yes, he were the living epitome of all Editors."[12] This comment comes in an avowedly didactic yet also historical work. Jocelin and Samson are not imagined, neither was the Chronica upon which Carlyle drew fictional. In Carlyle's article "An Election to the Long Parliament" there is a foray into the more traditional realm of editing, but the documents there placed before the reader are important because they present to him "what was really memorable and god-like in the History of his Country, distinguishing the same from what was at bottom unmemorable

and devil-like.[13] And in the Latter-Day Pamphlets, of which Carlyle styles himself the "editor," he writes:

> You did not know that the Universe had laws of right and wrong . . .? And so, amid such universal blossoming-forth of useful knowledges, miraculous to the thinking editor everywhere, -- the soul of all 'knowledge,' not knowing which a man is dark and reduced to the condition of a beaver, has been omitted by you? You have omitted it, and you should have included it! The thinking editor never missed it, so busy wondering and worshipping elsewhere; but it is not here.[14]

Carlyle goes on to imply that editors have taken over the role priests once played in society: they too are attempting to reveal a divine truth.[15]

Then there is Cromwell, which of necessity combines aspects of the more traditional view of editing along with Carlyle's elevated view of the task. "I have ventured to believe that . . . these old dim letters of a noble English Man might . . . dimly present, better than all other evidence, the noble figure of the Man himself again." Properly edited letters were instructive. "At least," Carlyle adds with his usual rhetorical flourish, "it is with Heroes and God-inspired men that I, for my part, would rather converse, in what dialect soever they speak!"[16] Out of the rubbish heaps and cartloads of dreary seventeenth century histories Carlyle had "edited" these still faintly luminous letters, the "irregular row of beacon-fires"[17] by which the past might be illuminated, a God-inspired hero rightly understood, and a modern reader instructed on how to kindle the fairer flame of his nature, the godlike in himself. The latter point is not the least important.

Indeed, the latter point is the most important to Carlyle. His primary task as editor was to teach men to know and love

heroism and wisdom. He tried to convey the message he felt the letters taught. At one point he writes "O modern reader, dark as this Letter may seem, I will advise thee to make an attempt towards understanding it," and then proceeds to help the reader along to the proper interpretation, writing again, and as if he were pronouncing a new commandment, "thou shalt understand that Letter."[18] The seriousness with which he viewed editing, and the intensity with which he felt he was revealing something divine comes in a draft relating to Cromwell which he did not publish:

> O Oliver, I was not at Marston with thee, stood not with him in the Lion's Den at Dunbar, shining like a pillar of hope when all was dark, in the high places of the field: no, and it well beseems this and all other Editors to translate such mute heroisms into voice the best they can; and to be careful what they say of such men, and not to utter falsities and confused misvoices and blasphemous delusions concerning such, -- at their (the said Editors') peril! They will find there is but one religion in the world, and never was any other; and that this is it; is and remains; -- He will find that "blasphemy" is still possible for an Editor; tho' the thunderbolt of the gods do not o'er take him till after year and day, it is very certain. This thunderbolt is certain enough! Tho' the Earth do not yawn under him till after year and day, it is at all days and all moments getting ready to yawn; to swallow him, the unfortunate . . . to bottomless Gehenna forevermore. Thither is he tending at all moments. Thither, and not elsewhither, I think! Is he not afraid to go about as Human Carrion, when the mission of him, spoken audibly from the deeps of Nature /is/ "Go and be a man! Recognise the noble; -- see thou do, and let no Devil hinder thee. Reverence the noble, as God's visible image; bow down before the noble; be thyself noble".[19]

Here we have most clearly defined the duties of the editor as Carlyle conceived them. He must "translate such mute heroisms into voice" and see "God's visible image" in the nobleness he recognises and reverences. In recalling that history is a

"Prophetic Manuscript," while the best biographer reveals "all that is Godlike" in man, one can hardly escape concluding the editor's goal is really the same as that of the historian and biographer. The means of revealing the divine may vary somewhat but the need and desire to reveal it is common to Carlyle as historian, biographer and editor.

We today may sagely nod agreement, or rudely snort contempt at Carlyle's conception of the editor and his task. But we ignore it at the peril of misunderstanding what he was attempting to do in Cromwell and in all his historical works. The most obvious question arising from all of this is, how well did Carlyle succeed? Obvious enough, yet impossible to answer since asking is another way of demanding how many adherents to his views Carlyle gained. He did not want to make Cromwell or Abbott Samson "live" as much as he wanted converts to his interpretation of them. He wanted recognition of the divine spark these men possessed. Only insofar as his portrayal of them effected this goal was it useful in his eyes. It was not a matter of one scholar fencing with another over the possible interpretation of Cromwell's actions. It was truth revealed, the crooked made straight, the Tables of the Law all over again. A story Emerson told a friend about Carlyle is instructive on this point:

> Carlyle, he /Emerson/ said, had grown impatient of opposition, especially when talking of Cromwell. I differed from him, he added, in his estimate of Cromwell's character, & he rose like a great Norse giant from his chair -- and, drawing a line with his finger across the table, said, with terrible fierceness: Then sir, there is a line of separation between you and me as wide as that, & as deep as the pit.[20]

One suspects most people would not accept Carlyle in this didactic-dogmatic role as revealer of the divine universe. And one might also wish Carlyle had more closely read his own essays on history and had heeded his own warnings about the extreme difficulty of knowing what happened, let alone interpreting it aright. The question of Carlyle's success we will leave to the judgment of the individual. Carlyle involved in the more mundane aspects of editing, with the ethereal bunting he attached to it, is now our concern.

In the introductory chapter "Of Oliver's Letters and Speeches" Carlyle clearly sets forth the editorial methods he employed. "I have corrected the spelling of these letters; I have punctuated, and divided them into paragraphs, in the modern manner." Originals, "so far as I have seen such," lacked paragraphs, possessed spelling common to the age before dictionaries, and often had the letter completed crosswise in the margin. Carlyle justified his alterations by referring curious readers to the manuscripts and printed versions that retained the old forms: specimens in abundance "and of all due dimness" were available; "but to us, intent here to have the Letters read and understood, it seemed very proper at once and altogether to get rid of that encumbrance."[21]

A final editorial feature of somewhat more questionable merit completes Carlyle's treatment of the letters and speeches themselves. "Here and there, to bring out the struggling sense, I have added or rectified a word -- but taken care to point out the same." It was his "supreme duty" to in no way alter the sense.[22] These methods, plus the elucidations, form the basis of Carlyle's editorial method in Cromwell. As a matter of general practice, these were the principles Carlyle chose to follow. He at one point instructed

John Christie: "In copying, you need not mind the spelling; make it all into correct spelling."[23] In another instance he wrote David Laing (17 Jan. 1842) regarding one of that editor's planned works, and repeated the same injunction. "I would recommend a complete chronological collection, with diligent not too abundant commentary, -- in modern spelling."[24]

Modern editors and readers can find little basis for criticism of these methods, provided of course Carlyle's practice followed his theory. Paragraphing, modernization of spelling, insertion of necessary punctuation, and even the noted addition of words are all features of the modern edition of Cromwell's works edited by Wilbur C. Abbott,[25] although these elements are clearly less frequent there than in Carlyle's edition. In theory the methods of the two editors are indistinguishable.

Yet in practice they are dissimilar. In the first place, Carlyle's methods did not always follow his introductory statements regarding them, and in the second, he did not achieve the thorough, painstaking accuracy to which Abbott may fairly lay claim. Indeed, it is doubtful Carlyle was interested in that sort of accuracy. This seeming breakdown between purpose and performance was brought to light with greatest thoroughness when Carlyle's Cromwell was re-edited by Sophie C. Lomas in 1904. Her edition also includes an account of Carlyle's composition of Cromwell by Charles H. Firth. Lomas kept Carlyle's commentary but attempted to find better sources for the letters and speeches, and also added a large number of letters discovered since Carlyle last updated his account. If only printed sources were available, she compared those texts she had, and attempted to determine which was most trustworthy. Whenever possible,

manuscripts were located and used. When the source chosen by Carlyle happened to be the best available, it was still often found that errors had crept into his rendering of it, and they had to be corrected. Thus in her edition the texts used are more accurate. Lomas often eliminated the paragraph divisions Carlyle introduced, added punctuation more sparingly and eliminated Carlyle's germanic capitalization as "troublesome to the eye."[26] Yet it is primarily the results of these rather mind-numbing exercizes in collation as they concern Carlyle and his editorial methods that are important here. She reaches two conclusions: First, that Carlyle frequently did not choose the best available text. As well as this, he was disinclined to use manuscript sources when printed texts were available. This has already been seen in his general research. Secondly, while Carlyle stated that all his interpolations were marked by inverted commas, in fact, especially in his treatment of the speeches, "the exceptions to this rule are very much more numerous than the examples of it."[27] Lomas concludes that "Taking Carlyle's edition as a whole, the mistakes in the letters are very numerous, but not, as a rule, important."[28] Certainly the fact that Lomas and Firth chose to leave Carlyle's narrative intact and simply altered his rendering of Cromwell's portion says a great deal about their regard for the book, and perhaps the eminence to which it had risen as valued, useful and ground-breaking historical literature, but not much about his ability as editor.

Lomas' conclusions are similar to those formulated about Carlyle the researcher. In any historian a dislike of manuscript and use of inferior sources would be unfortunate; in an editor it must be regarded as inexcuseable. His alterations of words without

acknowledgement was demonstrated in the brief examination of his working papers. He quoted "directly" there, but inaccurately. To proceed in such a manner deliberately would normally be considered deception. But circumstances are rarely normal where Carlyle is concerned, and deception -- a conscious desire to mislead, an attempt to cause people to accept a falsehood as fact -- was simply unthinkable to him. The proof of this comes in Lomas' statement that the alterations were unimportant, and from the actual collation of texts.

Still, one demands an explanation for Carlyle's method. He cannot be excused for having followed general editorial standards of his day, because he did not. To say so insults the achievements of many editors of seventeenth century correspondence who wrote in and prior to Carlyle's day. According to Lomas the Birch transcripts of Thurloe's letters as found in the Collection of the State Papers "are admirably correct." Another collection of correspondence, Vaughan's Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell (London, 1838) "has very few errors."[29] The edition of the Fairfax correspondence (London, 1849), Cary's Memorials of the Great Civil War, and Caulfield's Cromwelliana are all edited in an admirable and trustworthy manner. Carlyle suffers by comparison.

The most likely explanation comes not so much in Carlyle's inability to copy accurately, although this certainly accounts for many of the errors, as in his conscious decision not to, which in turn derives from his idea of the editor's role. In making the document in question intelligible it was quite permissible, even essential to alter words in order to bring out the sense. And since the true sense has now been divined, what was the importance or

significance of an unnoted word or phrase? To call attention to it would merely clutter up the page and annoy the reader.

The first letter to be examined in elucidating Carlyle's editorial methods is number 107 in the Centenary edition, which details the siege and storm of Wexford during the Irish campaign in October 1649.[30] Warfare in Cromwell's day often consisted of a series of sieges of fortified towns. It was usual to summon the town besieged, which meant asking it to surrender under certain conditions or else face the prospect of starvation in a long, drawn-out siege. Alternately, the town's defenses could be stormed or attacked. It could also happen that if the town refused to surrender the siege might be raised since the attackers were forced to live off the scanty country resources. Cromwell's procedure at Wexford was to demand the town's surrender. Commander Sinnott hesitatingly and hedgingly refused, drawing out the process several days. By the time Sinnott indicated a willingness to come to terms, actual storming operations had begun and Cromwell in his report implies he was unable to control the action of his men: the garrison forces were routed, with nearly 2,000 being put to the sword.

For his first edition Carlyle had only a single source for Cromwell's letter -- a report of the operation sent to William Lenthall, Speaker of the House of Commons. That source was Caulfield's Cromwelliana, a book Abbott calls "invaluable."[31] Certainly Carlyle was on firm ground in drawing from it. Yet the set of letters given by Caulfield is incomplete, and it was only after publication of Carlyle's first edition that information about the rest of the correspondence was made known to him. Letter 107 is actually a series of letters. Cromwell's dictated account of the successful

maneuverings was sent to Lenthall along with the correspondence concerning the fruitless attempt to come to terms that passed between himself and Commander Sinnott. All told, eleven brief letters passed between the two men, five from Cromwell, six from Sinnott. Also submitted to Cromwell by Sinnott, and sent to Lenthall was a list of rejected surrender propositions. All but one letter of this material is found in Cary, while a copy of Cromwell's final letter was sent to Carlyle by the owner of the manuscript.[32]

Carlyle's treatment of this group of correspondence is interesting. Rather than separate the letter to Lenthall from the futile negotiations he chooses to weld the collection into something resembling a coherent chronological account. Apparently following Caulfield's method, Carlyle has taken the longer, expository account of the siege sent to Lenthall, and inserted into it at the appropriate moments portions of the rest of the correspondence. The effect is that of continuous narrative, and as an account of the episode it reads better and has greater continuity and more drama than a separate account of the letters would.

For the rest Carlyle's collating and editing of the accounts give little reason for complaint, though they are in some respects curious. Collation reveals no substantive differences, but where the accounts vary Carlyle does not consistently prefer one text to another, although Cary's version came from manuscript sources and Caulfield's from newspapers. In several instances Carlyle has added a word without noting the fact, and he also alters the form of some words, undoubtedly to make them more modern. Generally, Carlyle seems to prefer the less obscure, archaic or ungrammatical text. Which one possessed more authority does not much trouble him. This

made it easier for Cromwell's words to be understood, and that was the point of the whole exercise. This is probably why Carlyle alters "they run away" to "they ran away," though both Cary and Caulfield print the former, or why "by the fort" becomes "beside the Fort" in Cromwell.[33] The only possibility of an alteration of sense comes where the two sources do not agree, and Carlyle decides upon a third reading. The phrases are as follows:

> and had they not opportunity (in Caulfield)
> and had they not had opportunity (in Cary)
> and had not they had opportunity[34] (in Cromwell)

In her edition Lomas gives the nod to the original manuscript which Cary edited, so in this instance Carlyle has gotten the sense correct despite an alteration of the text.[35] This holds true throughout the letters, by and large. It is only on rare occasions that Carlyle over-edits, alters or adds too many words, and in the process does violence to the probable meaning. This is the case in Letter 93.[36]

Carlyle's emendations reach their apogee here. The letter deals with the financial aspects of Richard Cromwell's marriage settlement and is relatively short. Yet Carlyle was moved to insert nineteen explanatory words, most "quite unnecessary" according to Lomas, plus two incorrect footnotes.[37] The error of one derives from Carlyle's misreading of the letter. Part of Carlyle's text, with his additions in inverted commas, reads as follows:

> I expect the Manor of Hursley to be settled upon your daughter and her heirs. . . . I expect, so long as they, 'the young couple' live with your, their diet, as you expressed; or in case of voluntary parting 'from you,' 150£ per annum. 'You are to give' 3,000£

> in case you have a Son*; to be paid in two years next following. In case your Daughter die without issue, -- 1,000£ within six months 'of the marriage.'
> *Grandson, i.e.: in the next sentence 'die' means more properly live.

Carlyle's additions here are for the most part misleading. Simply stated, Cromwell does not mean grandson, nor does die mean live: Cromwell demands that Richard Mayor's manor go to the potential daughter-in-law upon her father's death. As a contingency, if Mayor were to have a son of his own, the inheritance would become one of cash (£3,000). If Mayor's daughter were to die childless Richard was to receive £1,000 from his father-in-law. To pause for a moment and read the letter as Carlyle interprets it reveals the ludicrousness of his construction. Insert "live" in place of "die," and the poor woman must prove her fecundity within six months of her wedding day -- hardly a likely prospect in a Puritan household! Lomas comments on this method saying "Carlyle unhesitatingly inserted words of his own, without reflecting that, as Cromwell was a very accurate writer, he would not be likely to send out letters that needed such 'embellishments' to explain them."[39] This is a justified criticism, especially as it regards this letter, since Cromwell knew what he meant, as did his correspondent. But Lomas overlooks the fact that time can be a great obscurer, or that modern readers might not know what was common knowledge to Cromwell. Also, Lomas was editing for a scholarly audience, Carlyle for the general reader. Certainly Carlyle overdid the "embellishments" here, and made an obscure letter nearly unintelligible, but the principle which he carried uppermost in mind can largely be seen to his credit.

His sources for the letters were overwhelmingly printed ones.

One from which he drew much material was William Harris' Historical and Critical Account of the Life of Oliver Cromwell, (London, 1762, 2nd ed., 1814). Carlyle termed it a "blind farrago"[40] but riffled through its pages long enough to extract over twenty letters. An examination of his treatment of them merely confirms what has already been said of his methods. Sentence structure is occasionally altered, a noun may have its number changed or a verb its tense. The alterations are too frequent to have been accidental, yet too unimportant to cause much concern. In a few instances in this series of letters, however, Carlyle has committed substantial errors. In letter 38 of the first edition Carlyle has inadvertently omitted a seven line postscript.[41] In letter 65 Harris has been unable to supply five words to the text due to a torn manuscript. Without hesitation Carlyle inserted his conjectural (yet almost certainly correct) readings.[42] In a final example, Carlyle may be accused of a slight deception concerning his citation of sources. In Cromwell's letter (144) to his son Richard's father-in-law written just after Dunbar battle, Carlyle quotes the letter "Upon Wednesday we fought the Scottish Armies" and footnotes the day: "'Wedesnd.' in the Original." This means that the manuscript had this curious spelling and implies Carlyle saw it. In fact, Carlyle never saw the original, gives no manuscript source, and was merely quoting from Harris' transcription -- which is accurate. Yet for Carlyle to imply he had examined in manuscript a letter he had only seen in print is misleading.[43]

As a final example of Carlyle's treatment of Cromwell letters taken from printed books, texts can be compared by printing both Carlyle's and his source's. The letter chosen is the first one in Carlyle's collection, and is given here as found in the first edition,

for which Harris was the only source. Aside from spelling and punctuation there are four alterations. On the whole it shows Carlyle's practical editorial method in a reasonable light: He remained faithful to the sense of the original, if not always to the precise wording.

(Carlyle)

To my very loving friend Mr. Storie, at the Sign of the Dog in the Royal Exchange, London: Deliver these.

St. Ives, 11th January 1635

MR. STORIE,

Amongst the catalogue of those good works which your fellow-citizens and our countrymen have done, this will not be reckoned for the least, That they have provided for the feeding of souls. Building of hospitals provides for men's bodies; to build material temples is judged a work of piety; but they that procure spiritual food, they that build up spiritual temples, they are the men truly charitable, truly pious. Such a work as this was your erecting the Lecture in our Country; in the which you placed Dr. Wells, a man of goodness and industry, and ability to do good every way; not short of any I know in England: and I am persuaded that, sithence his coming, the Lord hath by him wrought much good among us.

It only remains now that He who first moved you to this, put you forward in the continuance thereof: it was the Lord; and therefore to Him lift we up our hearts that He would perfect it. And surely Mr. Storie, it were a piteous thing to see a Lecture fall, in the hands of so many able and godly men, as I am persuaded the founders of this are; in these

(Harris)

"MR. STORIE, amongst the catalogue of those good workes which your fellowe citycenes and our cuntrie men have donn, this will not be reckoned for the least that they have provided for the feedinge of soules: buildinge of hospitalls provides for mens bodyes, to build materiall temples is iudged a worke of pietye, but they that procure spirituall food, they that builde up spirituall temples, they are the men truly charitable, trulye pious. Such a work as this was your erectinge the lecture in our cuntrie, in the which you placed Dr. Welles, a man of goodnesse and industrie and abilitie to doe good every way: not short of any I knowe in England, and I am perswaded that sithence his cominge, the Lord by him hath wrought much good amongst us. It only remains now that he whoe first moved you to this, put you forward to the continewance thereof, it was the Lord, and therefore to him lift we up our harts that he would perfect itt. And surely Mr. Storie it were a piteous thinge to see a lecture fall in the hands of soe manie able and godly men as I am perswaded the founders of this are, in theise times wherein wee see they are suppressed with too much hast, and violence by the enemies of God, his truth, far be it that soe much guilt should sticke to your hands, who live in a citye

times, wherein we see they are suppressed, with too much haste and violence, by the enemies of God's Truth. Far be it that so much guilt should stick to your hands, who live in a City so renowned for the clear shining light of the Gospel. You know, Mr. Storie, to withdraw the pay is to let fall the Lecture; for who goeth to warfare at his own cost? I beseech you therefore in the bowels of Jesus Christ, put it forward, and let the good man have his pay. The souls of God's children will bless you for it: and so shall I; and ever rest,

Your loving Friend in the Lord,

OLIVER CROMWELL.

Commend my hearty love to Mr. Busse, Mr. Beadly, and my other good friends. I would have written to Mr. Busse; but I was loath to trouble him with a long letter, and I feared I should not receive an answer from him: from you I expect one so soon as conveniently you may. Vale.

so renowned for the clere shininge light of the gospell. You knowe Mr. Storie to withdrawe the pay is to lett fall the lecture, for whoe goeth to warfare at his owne cost. I beseech you therefore in the bowells of Christ Jesus putt it forward and let the good man have his pay. The soules of God his children will bless you for it; and soe shall I, and ever rest

"Your lovinge friend in the Lord,

"OLIVER CROMWELL

"Commende my hearty love to Mr. Busse, Mr. Beadly, and my other good friends. I would have written to Mr. Busse, but I was loath to trouble him with a longe letter, and I feared I should not receive an answer from him, from you I expect one soe soon as conveniently you may. Vale. To my very lovinge friend Mr. Storie, at the sign of the Dogg in the Royal Exchange London, dle. theise." 43a

In examining Carlyle's method thus far we have collated his texts with printed sources. Sometimes manuscripts were used, which gives the added opportunity of seeing how accurate Carlyle and his assistants were in transcribing. However, instances in which Carlyle can be proven to have done the transcribing himself, and not merely to have copied someone else's work, include only one letter and a small part of a second, although there may be more. Examples of his brother John's efforts are more numerous. John Christie's transcriptions were the most numerous, but seem mainly to have been taken from printed sources.

It is not well-known that John Carlyle helped his brother in

the early days of the compilation. In one of Carlyle's lists of Cromwell letters available at the British Museum is written in John's firm, vigorously slanted hand the first line of a letter, in order to help identify it for his brother.[44] More conclusive and interesting are his transcripts of twelve Cromwell letters copied from the Sloan and Lansdowne manuscripts.[45] These were made in early 1844, shortly after Carlyle decided to collect the letters. On 11 January he wrote his mother that John "is very busy at the British Museum in these days; searching into old Books and writings; partly in help to me, I believe: many such researches are necessary for me in my present enterprise."[46] On 3 March he likewise wrote to brother Alexander that "of late" John "has lighted on some historical departments, neighbouring to mine (old Manuscripts of the British Museum etc.) and is making himself rather busy with those."[47] Whether John, being idle in those days offered to help his brother, or Thomas simply claimed his services, is uncertain. The transcriptions include twelve letters copied by John, one by Carlyle, and a final letter in which both have transcribed a portion. The likelihood is strong that all but one of these transcriptions were used by Carlyle, since to one of them Carlyle has added some editorial comment which appears in Cromwell[48] and also because all but one of the letters has a vertical line drawn through it -- Carlyle's indication that material has been used. One letter has a bold X drawn through it. The transcript of it Carlyle used probably came from Christie at a later date: the version John has copied does not agree with the one Carlyle prints.[49] These transcripts are useful for a number of reasons. First, they confirm that John was another of Carlyle's unnamed assistants. Secondly, they again remind

us of Carlyle's "impatience of manuscript." These letters were easily accessible at the British Museum; but Carlyle, at the very time he was "assiduously collecting all Letters and authentic utterances that came from Oliver himself"[50] could, or would not copy them for himself. Thirdly, these letters give us an opportunity to see how accurate and careful John's transcriptions were.

Unfortunately, he cannot be given consistently high marks, since his work was uneven. This particular letter was copied by John from the Lansdowne manuscripts. Carlyle used his brother's text in the first edition, which was reprinted unchanged in the Centenary edition, where it is number 197.

(Carlyle)

"For Captain Unton Crook, At Exeter: These."

Whitehall, 20th January 1654.

Sir, -- Being informed by a Letter of yours and General Desborow, also by a Letter from the High Sheriff of Devon, that Adjutant-General Allen doth very ill offices by multiplying dissatisfaction in the minds of men to the present Government, I desire you and the High Sheriff to make diligent inquiry after him, and try to make-out what can be made in this kind, and to give me speedy notice thereof. Not doubting of your care herein, I rest your loving friend,

OLIVER P.

If he be gone out of the Country, learn whither he is gone, and send me word by next post.

(Manuscript)

Sr

Beinge informed by a letter of yors and Gen: Disbrowe alsoe by a Letter from the High: Shiriff of Devon that Adjutant Generall Allen doth very ill offices by multiplyinge dissatisfactions in the minds of men with the present Governmt. I desire you & ye High Shiriff to make diligent inquirey after hym, and try to yr uttermost what can be made out of his practisinge in this kinde & to give me speedy notice thereof. Not doubting of yor care herein I rest

Yor Lovinge Friend
Oliver P

Whitehall
20 Jan.54./

If he be gone out of the Countrye, Learne whither he is gone, & send me word by the next post.[51]

Several inaccuracies have crept in. Their incidence in this collection

is common. Most are minor, although the mutilated sentence in the above example certainly could not be so deemed. Neither could John's transcription of a letter (82) in which he renders "these, even to amazement" as "these men (sic) to amazement."[52] In another letter (51) John was unable to puzzle out a word and wrote "I long to with you." Carlyle without pause inserted "be" although a brief examination of the manuscript would have revealed "rejoice" as the correct rendering.[53]

Carlyle's main source of letters after printed books was the transcriptions sent to him by correspondents of varying degrees of helpfulness, reliability and education. John Carlyle was an intelligent man, if not trained in editing or transcribing. It is probable similar mistakes were made by other correspondents. A final conclusion is that Carlyle himself revised the transcriptions he was given, as well as the letters he drew from printed texts. This has Carlyle altering further what is often an imperfect transcription to begin with -- Carlyle aiding and abetting potential error or misstatement. In such circumstances it is not surprising that Lomas and Firth felt that a new and more accurate edition of Cromwell's letters was needed.

Carlyle's treatment of the letters cannot automatically be applied to his method with Cromwell's speeches. The tactics employed differed because the nature of the utterances differed. As Lomas wrote, in the speeches "we have not what Cromwell said, but only what he is reported to have said."[54] The accuracy of the speeches depended on who wrote them down. For some speeches no good texts are known. Carlyle's method is at once idiosyncratic and eminently epitomistic of his own haphazard research methods and disdain for the sources he

relied on so heavily. In the Centenary Edition of Cromwell there are eighteen speeches in the body of the text. The first edition has one less. For most of them manuscript accounts did exist, many of which Carlyle knew. Yet in no instance did he take as his text an actual manuscript: in fact, he relied entirely on printed versions of the speeches, though at times he was not above implying that he had consulted the manuscript. Generally, Carlyle contented himself with a single version of a speech, not bothering to find other accounts and collate for accuracy. Whatever text he chose he made frequent alterations in punctuation, paragraphing and word arrangement. Most importantly, in some speeches he drastically altered Cromwell's reported words so that at times they bear little resemblance to the text of his source. In addition, he frequently interjects partisan commentary into the text himself, but does take care to enclose it within brackets.

In fairness to Carlyle it must be admitted the speeches are far more difficult to follow than the letters. Especially in Cromwell's longer harangues, sentences become fragments, and there is tautology and repetition. The sense is obscured in rough words hastily and extemporaneously spoken and imperfectly copied by reporters of unknown reliability. Carlyle realized this: "The Speeches above all, as hitherto set forth . . . excel human belief: certainly no such agglomerate of opaque confusions, printed and reprinted; of darkness on the back of darkness, thick and threefold; is known to me elsewhere in the history of things spoken or printed by human creatures."[55] It was the editor's task to make the speeches understood, and Carlyle was frank about his methods in securing this goal. At the conclusion of the first speech Carlyle writes of it: "In the present

case, it is surprising how little change has been needed beyond the mere punctuation, and correct division into sentences. Not the slightest change of meaning has, of course, anywhere seemed, or shall anywhere seem, permissible" (emphasis added).[56] At another point Carlyle refers to "insignificant" changes and adds that they are footnoted "wherever they seem to have importance or physiognomic character" (emphasis added).[57] Thus Carlyle does admit that he has made substantive alterations to the texts he used without noting them specifically. However, the admission is oblique and does not come in the "Introduction" where other editorial methods are discussed. At yet another point, when using a text manifestly corrupt, he literally dares the reader to take issue with alterations he has made. "We suppress, we abridge, we elucidate; struggle to make legible his Highness's words. . . . The curious reader can, in all questionable places, refer to the Printed Coagulum of Jargon itself, and see whether we have read aright."[58] There are two thoughts expressed here. One is that editing itself involves a certain amount of interpretation, and another rather more startling, that in order to be understood the speeches had to be changed. Both are essential to understanding Carlyle's methods.

Another aid to the reader's pursuit of understanding, aside from the historical background preceding and following the speeches is Carlyle's interjections into the text, which Firth calls "his greatest fault as an editor."[59] These interjections are just that: bracketed insertions, clearly marked off from the text, containing a variety of comments and observations, some relevant, others merely tiresome, but most attempting in some way to help the reader interpret the material before him.

Many apologize for the grammar of the speeches. "His Highness finds this sentence will not do, and so tries it another way."[60] Others strongly approve of what Cromwell has said, and enjoin the reader to heed his Highness. "Right so, your Highness; that is the grand cardinal certainty! An irrevocable Act of Legislature passed in one's own heart."[61] Or again, "Beautiful, thou noble soul! -- And very strange to see such things in the Journals of the English House of Commons. O Heavens, into what oblivion of the Highest have stupid, canting, cotton-spinning, partridge-shooting mortals fallen."[62] Still other interpolations describe the reaction of the assembly to which Cromwell spoke, or the tone of voice in which the speech was delivered. Thus Oliver speaks a sentence "With a kind of glance over those honourable faces; all silent as if dead, many of them with their mouths open."[63] In another, dull "Whitelocke, in a heavy manner, smiles respectful assent."[64] Carlyle does not say much about these interpolations and their intent. They are banteringly referred to as being written in "an altogether modern hand," and he admits that perhaps more of them ought to have been suppressed.[65] At another point he only "with reluctance" admits "a few annotations."[66] Still, it is obvious that these interpolations do serve several functions. At times they offer useful information, acting as footnotes within the text, This keeps the reader's eye from straying to the base of the page. They also help break up the monotony of the text, which keeps the reader's eye from closing. For even the clearest of Cromwell's speeches is without fail unfelicitously phrased and a chore to read. Carlyle recognized this. By commenting on the setting, the audience's response, or the position of the Protector's eyebrows he creates the aura of the drama, and conjures up an actual

scene, instead of reprinting mere words. The interpolations help him fulfill what he sees as his proper editorial function. This is best done by commenting more specifically on the content of the speech and saying at different points, "Hear this Lord Protector!" At these points Carlyle is actually saying to his readers "You pay attention now -- this is the important part, as your faithful editor has discovered." Even Firth makes allowances for the interpolations' "artistic purpose" in Carlyle's "kind of historical drama," but goes on to call their function comic.[67] Certainly humor is present in the interpolations but to call this their sole motivation does the earnest, didactic Carlyle a disservice. In including them he clearly had instruction more in mind than amusement.

Though the added commentary can be explained and largely justified, it is difficult to offer any satisfactory reason for Carlyle's ignoring of manuscript sources for the speeches. They were accessible and from his printed sources he was aware of their existence, yet he chose not to use them. He did not even refer to speeches printed in the King's Pamphlets for earlier, less corrupt printed texts. At times this attitude is quite incomprehensible. In the series of kingship speeches Carlyle takes several from the Somer Tracts (London, 1809-15) in Walter Scott's edition. The speeches had originally been printed in a pamphlet titled Monarchy Asserted, which, had Carlyle looked, he would have found in its second edition in the King's Pamphlets.[68] It is all the more strange that however badly indexed this collection was, Carlyle did not make the attempt, especially in light of what he says about the text in Somers. The pamphlet existed in a state "enough to drive any Editor to despair!" Furthermore, "new unchecked Printers and Imaginary-Editors following"

have made "the matter ever worse, /and/ have produced at last in our late time such a Coagulum of Jargon as was never seen before in the world!"[69] Carlyle here implies a certain laborious comparison and consulting of texts, but such was far from the actual fact, for Carlyle made no attempt so far as is known to locate the original pamphlet. His comment about imaginary editors is strange since he only worked from Scott's edition of Somers Tracts. He did not collate this account with the eighteenth century edition of Somers, or the two editions of the original pamphlet. He simply assumed, based on his reading of the Scott edition, that there had been several reprintings of the pamphlet, each one worse than the last. In fact, the root of the problem was the original pamphlet itself. It was not a good text and its subsequent editors did the best they could with it, changing little. Had Carlyle looked he could have discovered this for himself, but this sort of research was not part of his method.[70]

Another instance will serve to illustrate Carlyle's lack of familiarity with his sources. In the first edition Carlyle has listed three sources for Cromwell's speech of 3 April 1657. A manuscript source is cited first, then Burton's Diary, for which the editor, John Rutt, copied the speech from the manuscript. The third source is the Parliamentary History.[71] Despite this impressive list investigation shows Carlyle probably did not consult any source but Burton. Collation confirms Carlyle chose Burton's account for his own text, and did not return to the manuscript, the existence of which he would have known from Burton's notes.[72] It further seems inconceivable Carlyle consulted the Parliamentary History because immediately on the heels of this speech in that source there follows another one,

dated 8 April 1657, which is omitted in the first edition. If Carlyle had consulted the earlier speech in this source it would have been impossible for him to miss the one he omitted. The later speech does come in the Supplement where Carlyle comments querulously that "ill-fated industry" found it.[73] It would be fairer to say lack of industry missed it out in the first place. It is more typical of Carlyle and does less injury to his reputation to assume he cited a source without actually consulting it.

To continue the litany of oversights, omissions, anomalies and inconsistencies in Carlyle's treatment of the speeches would be pointless. Before closing this section an excerpt from a speech will be given to provide some example of the form his alterations and interpolations took. It is taken from the "Coagulum of Jargon" found in the Somers Tracts and is a portion of Cromwell's speech of 13 April 1657 on the possibility of his assuming the title of king.

(Somers Tracts)	(Carlyle)
there are very many inforcements to carry on this thing, I suppose it will stand upon a way of expedience and fitness; truly I should have urged one consider-ation more that I had forgotten, and that is not only to urge the things for reason, but for experience; perhaps it is a short one, but it is a true one, (under favour) and is known to you all in the fact of it, (under favour) although there have been no parliamentary declarations, that the supreme authority going in another name, and under another title than king, why it hath been complied with twice without. That is, under the Custodes Libertatis Angliae, it hath since I exercised the place, and truly I may say, that almost universal obedience hath been	'There are very many inforcements to carry on this thing. /Thing of the Kingship./ But I suppose it will "have to" stand on its expediency -- Truly I should have urged one consideration more which I forgot /Looks over his shoulder in the jungle, and bethinks him!/, -- namely, the argument not of reason only, but of experience. It is a short one, but it is a true one (under favour) /A damnable iteration; but too characteristic to be omitted/: That the Supreme Authority going by another Name and under another Title than that of King hath been, why it hath been already twice complied with! /Long Parliament, called 'Keepers of the Liberties of England,' found compliance; and now the 'Protectorate' finds./

given to all the ranks and sorts of men to both; and to begin with the highest degree of magistracy at the first alteration, and when that was the name, and though it was the name of an invisible thing, yet the very name (though a new name) was obeyed, did pass for current, and was received, and did carry on the justice of the nation. I remember very well, that my lords the judges were somewhat startled, and, yet upon consideration (if I mistake not) I believe so, there being of them, without reflection, as able and as learned as have sat there, (though they did, I confess, at first demur a little) yet they did receive satisfaction, and did act as I said before.

"Twice": under the Custodes Libertatis Angliae, and also since I exercised the place, it hath been complied-with. And truly I may say that almost universal obedience hath been given by all ranks and sorts of men to both. Now this, "on the part of both these Authorities," was a beginning with the highest degree of Magistracy at the first alteration; and "at a time" when that "Kingship" was the Name "established": and the new Name, though it was the name of an invisible thing, the very Name, I say, was obeyed, did pass current, was received and did carry-on the "Public" Justice of the Nation. I remember very well, my Lords the Judges were somewhat startled: yet upon consideration, -- if I mistake not, -- I believe so, -- they, there being among them (without reflection) as able and as learned as have sat there, -- though they did, I confess, at first, demur a little, -- they did receive satisfaction, and did act, as I said before.' /Untwist this extraordinary WITHE of a sentence; you will find it not inextricable, and very characteristic of Oliver!/ 74

In this speech Carlyle takes by far the greatest number of liberties, which perhaps makes it unrepresentative. Yet it is typical in another since it shows the danger of Carlyle's method of "improvement." It also shows him struggling to bring out an often obscure meaning, trying to understand the speeches in a way few before him had attempted. He sought to make history relevant by first making it comprehensible, which meant convincing people his interpretation was correct. In trying to get others to see as he did he certainly took indecent liberties with his texts, and left himself open to

charges of deliberate distortion.[75] For the most part, he did succeed in getting others to look at his interpretation, and many liked what they saw. Attempting to justify Carlyle's procedure on this level, however, comes perilously close to the ends justifying the means, which may not be a seemly argument to make.

Most historians, and especially Sir Charles Firth, have roundly criticized Carlyle as editor. While some is certainly justified, much arises from the different conceptions of the role of editor held by Carlyle and his critics. Briefly to restate this important point, the issue for Carlyle was simply this: what good is an exact unreadable text? This becomes clearer as one thumbs through the Lomas or Abbott editions. Very soon the manifest fact about them strikes one. Above all, they aim to be scholarly editions of Cromwell's writings and speeches. Now that term may imply many things, most of them good, but it also often means a certain patience-trying tediousness, an inclination to verbosity and prolixity, a retreat to unintelligibility. However much the modern editors of Cromwell may have improved the accuracy of what Cromwell said or wrote, they have also by the sheer bulk of their editions, rendered the man less accessible to the average reader. The footnotes are greatly expanded and the continuity of the text marred as a result. Speeches are collated and time-consuming variant readings of small importance are given. Both Lomas and Abbott are partisans of their attempted objectivity. Carlyle did not work this way. He devised his own unique system -- a hybrid that no one could reproduce -- and adhered to it firmly, if not obstinately. By and large the system worked for Carlyle and his readers. So it may be argued the success of Carlyle's approach to some extent justifies his methods.

Yet we cannot overlook its drawbacks and failings, especially in terms of research. It is now our rather painful duty to recount a curious incident known as the Squire affair, the end result of which was Carlyle's initial unequivocal acceptance of thirty-five Cromwell letters that turned out to be unequivocal forgeries. A summary of this matter reveals that Carlyle's conduct during the affair did not differ from his research methods during the writing of Cromwell. It helps define his methods and their inherent weakness all the more sharply.

A great deal of ink has been spilled over the Squire controversy. Since the publication of evidence discrediting the letters admirers of Carlyle (so far as they have noticed) have done little but solemnly shake their heads in muted and embarrassed disgust, while many Civil War historians have crowed over the vindication of Dryasdust, and patronizingly intimated that the writing of history should be left to the specialists. The whole affair is a strange one. Many details of it have come to light but no thorough account has ever been given. Carlyle himself, with greater clairvoyance than even his prophetic stature could claim for him, spoke of the incident as a "farce-tragedy; very ludicrous as well as very lamentable."[76]

By January 1847 Carlyle had published two editions of Cromwell, the second having appeared on 16 June 1846.[77] The initial publication late in the preceding year had brought to his attention a large number of Cromwell's letters which he grudgingly decided to include in a new edition. Writing to Emerson (3 Jan. 1846) he rather vaguely notes "some 50 or so of new (not all insignificant) Letters have turned up, and I must try to do something rational with these; -- with which painful operation I am again busy."[78] The usual lamentations returned

to his own letters as he edited Cromwell's and provided a modicum of elucidation for them. To Jean, early in the throes of preparation (4 Jan. 1846) he wrote "once more, I am obliged to duck into those horrid quagmires from which I had fancied myself forever excaped."[79] Worth noting about these new letters is that Carlyle gained knowledge of most of them from correspondents unknown to him. They pointed out printed sources he had overlooked, or sent copies of manuscripts in their possession, or in collections to which they had access. By my own reckoning at least twenty of the additions were of the latter kind. As was shown, Carlyle had no scholarly compunction over accepting copies and in none of these instances of help was there any hint that Carlyle was dealing with less than honest men.

With the second edition in print he attempted to throw off the shackles binding him to Oliver. He had escaped "alive from these detestable Dust-Abysses" and called this edition "the final one."[80] Yet letters still turned up, correspondence about them trickled in, and the dust swept under the rug began to cause unsightly bulges. It could not have been with much surprise, however great the groaning may have been, that Carlyle received and read a letter (29 Jan. 1848) from "Yr obt W. Squire." The letter was brief, yet ungrammatical almost to the point of incoherence. "I have just concluded reading your publication of the letters and speeches of the Lord Protector Oliver. which has given me great Pleasure also at your candid mode of handling them the truth I find has come out at last." Of greater interest, perhaps, to Carlyle, were manuscript extracts which Squire enclosed, including a letter of Cromwell's. Squire explained the history of his documents. "I have certain papers relating to the time of the troubles written by one who rode with Oliver . . . up to

Naseby and Bristol siege." Throughout the letter Squire tended to ramble, and also offered some wild information. For instance, he possessed an ancient orange filled with cloves that Charles I held on his march to the scaffold, and he also seemed certain that after the Restoration Cromwell's body was secretly reinterred at Naseby field. There was also the information that Cromwell's son Oliver was killed in a skirmish about the time of Marston Moor[81] which coincided neatly with Carlyle's inference that he had "already fallen in these Wars."[82]

Carlyle replied to Squire, thanking him and requesting further information about possible Cromwell letters. He next wrote to FitzGerald on 6 February. Squire was a "rusty old Yarmouth gentleman" "possessed of curious Papers, which ought to be inquired into!" The manuscripts he owned might "contain good notices" wrote Carlyle, enclosing the letters and notices Squire had already sent. He proceeded to presumptuously throw the matter into FitzGerald's lap: "as he lies in your district, and you are partly concerned in the business, I will hand him over to your care." Carlyle concluded, "I think it really a pity some rational person did not look over his Papers, and see whether they contain nothing."[83] FitzGerald replied (8 Feb. 1848) that, although he doubted he would be allowed access to the papers, he could probably see Squire in the spring; in fact, it would not be until late June that the visit would take place.[84] In the meantime Squire wrote Carlyle again and provided more information about his ancestor, now identified as Samuel Squire. Pleased that the truth about Oliver was at last revealed, he half promised further information and hinted that more letters were available. "if I send you by and bye copies of Olivers letters

to this Sam Squire will you promise me not to print his Name only. S.S. as otherwise they may rot for what I shall care."[85]

In another letter to FitzGerald (20 Feb. 1847) Carlyle reiterated his desire that someone -- presumably FitzGerald -- go and examine Squire's papers. Having been "driven nearly mad by similar blockheads" Carlyle himself had no desire to see the papers, but merely wanted to discover whether there were more Cromwell letters. "If you can do anything farther do it -- if not, not" was his parting shot. There the matter rested for some time.[86]

The next episode in the drama finds the plot thickening. Sometime in the spring Carlyle managed to extract "some Ten or Twelve of the most curious Letters of Oliver I have even read."[87] Spurred into action by this unexpected cache, Carlyle shot off a letter to Squire pledging "life and fortune" for a brief loan of the papers, especially the ancestor's Journal, all of which Squire had said were kept in London. Carlyle soon received the shocking reply that Squire had burned all the documents. He was beside himself. "Did you ever hear of such a distracted old gentn? Did such a vexation ever befal in the search into English history before?" Lamented Carlyle to FitzGerald (15 June 1847), "We must console ourselves the best we may."[88]

Soon after, FitzGerald paid his long-expected visit to Squire and was quite taken by this "straightforward, choleric, ingenuous fellow" who was also "a little mad." Carlyle accepted this account joyfully and felt that a touch of insanity was the likeliest explanation for the destruction of the precious papers.[89] What had survived in the form of the copies sent to Carlyle he now set about arranging and editing. During the summer and autumn Carlyle wrote to Squire

a number of times, mainly asking him to ransack his memory for information on obscure points, especially references to the lost Journal Samuel Squire had kept. Strangely, Squire was able to recall quite precisely a great deal that was in the supposedly burnt Journal. Carlyle himself seemed to rely on this Journal, his Cromwell or his memory for what other information he needed.[90] It is difficult to view him working up much enthusiasm for the article. To his mother he wrote (26 Oct. 1847) he was "about a small job, very busy." It was "A mere nothing; but I decided to have it off my hand" because of the expected arrival of Emerson in England.[91] A month later he sent her a copy of the article[92] which was offered to the public in the December number of Fraser's Magazine under the title "Thirty-Five Unpublished Letters of Oliver Cromwell." True to his word to Squire, he recounted the story of the letters, but kept the communicator of them anonymous.

So far so good. In normal circumstances Carlyle would have forgotten about the article once it was finished, but the article was not normal, neither were the circumstances surrounding it. A controversy soon blazed up over whether or not the letters were genuine, and whether Carlyle, or some unknown writer might possibly be pulling the public's leg.

The Athenaeum was among the first periodicals to question the letters' authenticity. The unusual manner in which they were said to have come to Carlyle excited suspicion. "Our words of qualification, nevertheless, are abundantly called for by the singular circumstances narrated by the historian with regard to these documents." The author found it strange Carlyle could sanction such a story and concluded, "It remains to be seen how far he may be able to

communicate his own implicit faith to the world of historical readers, students and searchers."[93] The next issue continued to express public doubt on the subject, promised a lengthier statement in the future and concluded with "examples of the suspicion" from a correspondent. This anonymous individual objected to some of the words and phrases in the letters including "stand no nonsense" which he said "'won't wash' as the saying of the Brewer's Son" The use of the word "Miss" was called "an anachronism not to be overlooked."[94]

The issue for 8 January 1848 contained the awaited leader, which raised several interesting points. It began by saying it believed the letters "to be genuine" in the main; however, there were still a number of suspicious circumstances surrounding their appearance and content. In the first place, they were "exactly what Mr. Carlyle wanted. They supply a much lamented hiatus in his history -- and they support most marvellously his position respecting the disposition, temper and habits of Cromwell." This was put down to coincidence. Yet the way in which Carlyle treated the documents on first learning of their existence was one of near negligence. Why did he not go and see the correspondent? Why allow a friend to intervene? Why rest "secure and quiet at home?" "We can scarcely reconcile this supineness -- this indifference to an interview -- with the somewhat rhapsodical strain in which Mr. Carlyle indulges when writing of the value of the documents." This well-founded criticism was slightly offset by the article's askew conclusion. The writer again asserted the letters were genuine, although perhaps mis-transcribed, and that they and the Journal probably still existed, the owner stating the contrary merely to enhance their pecuniary value. Thus this owner's story is the forgery, and Carlyle had been "innocently made the

'instrument of palming /it/ upon the world." The article ends with a remark on the "suspicion" of the documents' "non-authenticity" and argues that there are words and phrases in them "which may not be warranted by the originals" -- in other words, the anachronisms were due to mistakes in transcription.[95]

It was not only the Athenaeum that questioned the letters. Carlyle was a prominent man with a position in society; when he spoke society cocked its head to listen. It was now furrowing its brow. Simply stated the letters made many people uneasy. The Athenaeum reported ~~wrote~~ that Lord Jeffrey wrote "a long letter on the subject" in which he weighed the evidence with judicial impartiality and found the letters wanting in authenticity. The Secretary of the Camden Society Mr. Bruce, a man "thoroughly versed in the history of Cromwell and his times" had "expressed his strong conviction that they are nothing more than ingenious impositions." The arguments against the letters mainly concerned the phraseology or the fact that the Cromwell in the letters tallied so perfectly with Carlyle's interpretation.[96]

This was Emerson's complaint about them. Emerson, in England for a season of lectures and fetes wrote to Elizabeth Hoar (28 Dec. 1847) "You have read his paper in Fraser? He told me the same story at his house, -- but it reads incredible & everybody suspects some mystification, some people fancying that Carlyle himself is trying his hand that way!"[97] It was also from Emerson that a report came down about Macaulay's vitriolically dismissing them as forgeries. The two dined together one evening, with Henry Hallam and others, and the conversation turned upon the Squire letters. Their support for Carlyle's interpretation was what troubled Emerson

> but the discussion turned on the external evidences of their being forgeries. Macaulay overcame everybody at the table, including Hallam, by pouring out with victorious volubility instances of the use of words in different meaning from that they bore in Cromwell's time, or by citing words which were not in use at all until half a century later.98

Finally, there was an incident Jane reported to her husband and John Forster. Sir Harry and Lady Verney came calling in mid-January, and thinking that, as wife of the great man himself she would be privy to the truth about the article, Sir Harry slyly sought to extract information from her:

> 'Pray Mrs Carlyle will you tell us what we <u>are</u> to believe about these letters of Cromwell?"
> "I suppose," I said, "there will be nothing for it but just to <u>believe that you believe in them</u>"
> But said Sir H, I can't understand &c --" a great deal he <u>could not understand</u> it seemed, and I did not feel it my business . . . to furnish him with understanding. I am told that Landor says <u>he</u> wrote the letters for a joke against Carlyle. . . . fool that he is practically, he would hardly I think indulge in such a jest.99

Throughout most of the uproar Carlyle maintained in public a grim tight-lipped silence, though there is no doubt the ruckus raised over the letters annoyed him intensely. On Christmas Day 1847 he wrote his sister Jean about "the audible bustle" over the Squire letters "in the <u>Athenaeum</u> and other such barren regions." There were "many long-eared persons insinuating . . . I have been <u>hoaxed</u> in the matter." To them Carlyle had nothing to say, but did have thoughts of "sending my 'Unknown Correspondent' <u>in person</u> up to the people (who is a terrible tower of a fellow, true as heart-of-oak and half-mad)."[100] Wielding a ~~cudgel~~ cudgel, he "might chance to settle the '<u>hoax</u>'-argument in a very sudden and unexpected manner."[101] What one suspects Carlyle meant here was first of all a confirmation

of his faith in the letters. Secondly, he must have felt hampered by his vow of silence concerning Squire's identity. If only they knew, Carlyle may well have thought, what a character this fellow really is, all questionings would cease. Squire's half-"madness" explained his actions for Carlyle, and would, he no doubt felt, have satisfied his readers as well. Of course, Carlyle could and did say nothing publicly on this head.

However, the embattled editor did have his defenders. Letters to the Examiner supported the authenticity of the Squire letters on historical and philological grounds. One correspondent quoted Hudibras for the use of "cravat" -- a suspect word -- and also offered a rhetorical argument concerning Cromwell's use of the phrase "stand no nonsense," thought by many to be anachronistic. Granted the phrase was not known to have been used in Cromwell's day, "it surely is no very great stretch of imagination . . . to suppose that Cromwell, whose whole life was one splendid protest and struggle against nonsense, should have hit upon that very expression."[102]

An earlier article in the Examiner arouses more interest because it was written by John Forster and added to and revised by Carlyle. It is highly uncharacteristic for Carlyle to have tried to answer his critics in this anonymous fashion. The article itself is a strong defense of the authenticity of the letters, maintaining it would be impossible to forge so many, that no matter how skillfully composed inaccuracies would have crept into them while no such historical errors had been found. Further, Squire himself was portrayed as somewhat unlettered, disinclined to antiquarian studies, and altogether incapable of such a forgery. They also noted that the "evidence" produced against the letters thus far was philological. Such an

argument was dismissed with patient contempt. "It is a kind of criticism which . . . cannot, by the nature of it, in almost any case, issue in certainty -- the alone desirable result. No man knows the exact date at which a given word was used for the first time in human speech or writing." The conclusion was a granite-hard affirmation of faith. "In short, we have seen nothing yet urged that is worthy of grave consideration, against the authenticity of these Cromwell letters."[103]

The controversy was not settled by this article, as Carlyle had predicted,[104] although it did soon subside. Yet silence did not mean acceptance. Most scholars remained skeptical, and for almost the next forty years their status was an uncertain one. Dogged research eventually exposed the inaccuracies in both the letters and Squire's representation of himself, and pronounced the letters spurious. It began with a brief notice by Samuel Rawson Gardiner in the 14 March 1885 Academy. In his reading in the King's Pamphlets he discovered a newspaper account reporting the cause of the death of Cromwell's son Oliver as smallpox. "Incidentally," Gardiner continued, "the quotation puts an end for ever to the pretensions of the Squire Papers to be genuine," since in them Squire, supposedly a close acquaintance of the elder Cromwell has young Oliver being killed in a battle near Knaresborough.[105] After a defense of the Squire letters by William Aldis Wright,[106] Gardiner returned to the scent and delivered the strongest, most conclusive evidence yet offered against the letters, conclusive because it was based in part on anachronisms, and not merely on improbable words or phrases. Gardiner first referred to the language, a rather rutted road by that time. Then he noted the curious method of dating the Squire

letters. Making the point that Cromwell was very consistent in inserting dates in even quite brief letters Gardiner wondered why only thirteen of the 35 Squire letters were dated after Cromwell's usual fashion. "Is it likely," Gardiner asked, "that the real Cromwell, in this one correspondence, would have broken away from all his habits?" In dealing more specifically with anachronisms he maintained that letter one, written March 1641/2, which spoke of the need to protect the King "from harm, or foul usage" "takes for granted a state of feeling in the country of which we have not the slightest hint anywhere else." A reference from the burnt Journal spoke of a "sad riot at Peterborough on the King's going to Stamford." Gardiner pointed out that such a reaction to the King, when the country was still at peace had "left no trace in the polemical literature of the time," a circumstance "more than marvellous." And in another example, a Squire letter dated 3 August 1643 finds Cromwell referring to the need to suppress the Lynn insurgency, while Gardiner shows from another source that Lynn had not yet shown any sign of rebellion. Certainly historical evidence of this order was more conclusive than any other previously offered.[107]

It was the next year when Aldis Wright, a defender of the authenticity of the Squire letters and the idea that Squire was a simpleton incapable of such an imposture, printed the correspondence between Squire, Carlyle and FitzGerald. At the same time he published a copy of Carlyle's account of his interview with Squire on 23 January 1849. As FitzGerald's literary executor, many of these materials had fallen to Wright's hands, while as his friend he had often heard the poet proclaim Squire's "perfect honesty."[108] Once this information came to light, Walter Rye, a Norwich antiquary, began

investigating Squire's account of himself and the letters, and discovered that Squire was a practised hoaxer and an amateur antiquary of some ability, who had easy access to the same Cromwellian texts Carlyle used. On the basis of this alone, Squire had misrepresented himself to FitzGerald and Carlyle, who both always insisted on his ignorance and mental instability.[109]

So the letters were at last conclusively shown to be forgeries, and all but Carlyle's most heated apologists accepted this verdict.[110] How does this incident reflect on Carlyle as editor and historian? In most it cannot but reflect badly, since he accepted the letters and remained publicly unshaken by the criticisms offered. They did not move him to re-investigate as they should have. In fact, Carlyle was more annoyed with than concerned by the controversy. The counts against him in this indictment of slipshoddiness are many. It is scarcely believeable he could value the papers so highly, yet make no effort to examine them. He even attempted to pass some of the blame for their destruction onto FitzGerald, who visited Squire later than he was supposed to, and after the burning of the papers.[111] This cavalier disregard for manuscripts is sadly typical of Carlyle the historian, as has been repeatedly shown. Secondly, Carlyle did not entertain a healthy suspicion about Squire or his story, and made no effort to seriously investigate either. Thirdly, once possessed of the new documents, Carlyle did not investigate them but relied mainly on his memory and his Cromwell for the elucidatory information needed. Since Squire cut his letters from Carlyle's bolt of Cromwell cloth, it is little wonder Carlyle found no errors, or was able to explain those he did find as mistakes in transcription. Fourthly, and finally, Carlyle did not notice how perfectly Squire's

Cromwell and Squire himself echoed Carlyle's own opinions. At one point Squire writes he "had rather ten to one be a Parliament man than a Stuart," and in the next breath proposes raising a statue to Oliver's memory. Besides, he adds incoherently, "Napoleon has got one over the water let us have one here to our hero."[112] FitzGerald wrote to Carlyle (29 June 1847) that Squire told him during their interview "a story of Peterboro' Cathedral like yours in your book about Ely -- Oliver marching in as the bells were ringing to service: bundling out canons, prebendaries, choristers, with the flat of the sword; and then standing up to preach himself in his armour! A grand picture."[113] At another point Squire mentions "Jesuitical Puseyites" and "Morrisons or any other Pill" which shows he knew his Past and Present as well.[114] Indeed, Squire knew his Carlyle, man and books, and in the forged letters produced exactly what he knew Carlyle wanted, exactly the anecdotes that would most fire his imagination.

Certainly Carlyle must be faulted on many counts. But I do not think it is justified to say, as Rene Wellek does, that "Carlyle showed . . . an almost unbelieveable naivete confronted with a hoaxer" and "also an utter lack of sense for the style and atmosphere of the seventeenth century. He was taken in by the crudest forgeries of letters."[115] More recently K. J. Fielding has written of the affair "Carlyle was deceived, and he refused to admit it."[116] There are problems with such condemnations. It should always be remembered a hoax only becomes obvious after it is exposed. In the case of Squire, Carlyle nibbled reluctantly at the bait before finally hooking himself. And Squire cast his line so skillfully that others aside from Carlyle were hooked. Neither the forgeries nor the forger were crude. As to his lack of knowledge of the seventeenth century

"atmosphere," by which presumably Wellek means the use of anachronistic words, Carlyle had his defenders on this score as well. And in the absence of glaring philological error, which the letters do lack, this argument must be one of the weakest in determining authenticity. Gardiner himself, though finding some of the language "startling," still laid the heaviest stress on the discovery of historical anachronism.[117] It is precisely on this point where the cited commentators err. For in none of the controversy over the Squire letters at the time of their appearance is there any substantive evidence put forward revealing contradiction with stated and verifiable historical fact. No doubt the murmuring should have put Carlyle on his guard. That they did not is to his discredit. Yet while there were philological jabs and inferential rabbit punches, there was no historical left hook to the jaw that would have sent Squire sprawling and his papers fluttering. Why Carlyle became so irritated at the criticism of the letters was not because the probing made him squirm, but precisely the opposite reason: to him it proved nothing. By no stretch of the imagination can it be said the letters were successfully discredited during the controversy immediately after their appearance. To say Carlyle was deceived and refused to admit it can only be a valid charge when the deception is known for what it is, yet still persisted in. Carlyle did not know he was deceived, and that we may view to his discredit. It is impossible to believe Carlyle would persist in insisting an error was the truth merely because it was convenient for him to do so. Evidence to support this contention is not lacking. For example, Carlyle changed his account of Naseby when FitzGerald proved him wrong. In addition, his little-known article, "The Sinking of the Vengeur," is entirely devoted to

correcting his own false portrayal of that incident in the French Revolution.[118]

There can be no doubt Carlyle would not have perpetuated a falsehood merely to save face. Even in the case of the Squire letters we do find Carlyle qualifying considerably his unequivocal acceptance of them. The criticism, although initially not convincing enough to expose the letters as forgeries, did raise doubts that needed to be resolved through further research. In his preface to the third edition of Cromwell, dated 16 October 1849 we see a reluctant Carlyle responding to the attacks on the letters. Whether or not they were genuine he would no longer say. The Squire letters must "for the present, and . . . for a long time remain, of doubtful authenticity to the world." Carlyle went on to dissociate these letters from the rest of Cromwell, conscious perhaps that the controversy surrounding the one might eventually bring into question the conclusions or scholarship of the more important work. The Squire letters were thus "a mere Adjacency" he advised the reader, "or thing in some kind of contact, -- kind of contact which can at any moment be completely dissolved, by the very Bookbinder if he so please."[119] Certainly he now had doubts about the authenticity of the Squire letters, even as he was certain of their essential insignificance genuine or not. His interpretation of Cromwell was of greater moment; anything distracting from that was burdensome and needed to be thrown off. Yet rather than investigate the affair closely and perhaps settle it, Carlyle, tired of Cromwell and Squire, left to others the sort of research he had rarely indulged in himself. This, more than anything else is to Carlyle's discredit. One must criticize Carlyle for not having investigated altogether better, for

it was his lack of a deep acquaintance with the period and a thorough knowledge of its sources and his own inertia in research that caused this incident. The Squire affair is an unfortunate, yet almost inevitable manifestation of Carlyle's lax research. Dryasdust may well let out a hearty guffaw; he has, in this instance, earned it.

In this chapter we have examined Carlyle as editor of the letters, speeches and Squire papers. As usual it is difficult to characterize his procedure because it is so at variance with what was and is orthodox for editors. His primary function in his role as editor was to communicate his interpretation of the letters and speeches. This desire to have them understood was his justification for altering them, although a few changes came through faulty transcriptions. The Squire affair also shows Carlyle as an editor and victim of a hoaxer. In Carlyle's editorial practice we have his theory put to use. This theory does not do much to enhance his reputation among modern editors with their generally unobtrusive fidelity to the text, yet there is a link between the two methods. A catchword for Carlyle in all endeavours was "sincerity." His use of this virtue brought out hitherto hidden or long obscured aspects of Cromwell's character. Such an interpretive delineation is always in some measure an editor's task. The modern emphasizes faithfulness to the text while Carlyle was heavier on the need for interpretation, and too unwilling to acknowledge the part an accurate text could play in aiding the interpretation. Both approaches are potentially a means to a fuller understanding and comprehension of the text. Take it as given that a text must be comprehended to be understood. The divergence between Carlyle and the rest comes not in this principle, which all accept, but in the working out of what is allowable or permissible in gaining

comprehension, then understanding.

Following Carlyle's logic, it has been necessary for us to examine his intentions in order to understand his methods. However wrongheaded those methods may seem, his fidelity to his goal of having the letters properly understood can only be viewed to his credit.

Chapter VI

Revealing Carlyle Revealing Cromwell:

His Methods and Mistakes

The last two chapters have looked at Carlyle's research and editorial techniques. Both lead to the present chapter which deals with Carlyle's writing of Cromwell. On the most basic level his daily routine can be established: how he proceeded during Cromwell, what his typical work-day was. What influence did the form of Cromwell have on the manner in which it was composed? Of more importance in considering this are those portions of narrative which punctuate but by no means dominate Cromwell. How did Carlyle decide what to include in his narrative, and how did this decision come about? In answering these questions attention will be paid to the narrative associated with the first two letters in Carlyle's collection, since more manuscript drafts are available for these letters than any other, and because they seem to have been critical in helping determine Carlyle's intentions regarding Cromwell.

The first problem is the extent of Carlyle's own writing in Cromwell. He estimated his contributions equalled Cromwell's[1] and rough calculations bear this out. In the first edition there are approximately 400,000 words, of which Carlyle contributed 207,000 to Cromwell's 194,000.[2] It may seem strange that an editor should have more to say than his subject but this is probably a reflection on Carlyle's early irresolution, his unhappy commitment to general history, and final decision to edit the letters and speeches. He no doubt found himself incapable of discarding his earlier writings

entirely, and made use of some of them in his "Introduction" and the elucidations to the first two letters. This part of Cromwell could be termed an abridged version of the Historical Sketches. Such an even ratio also shows the length to which Carlyle would go in order to have the letters properly understood. Finally, the figures show that Cromwell is not exactly the collection it claims to be. At times it is an edition of the letters and speeches, at other times it resembles a biography of Cromwell, while elsewhere it becomes a history of the period. It is all of these things in part, yet none of them entirely.

As noted before, though Carlyle decided to make a compilation he still meant at first to follow it with a biography. With this purpose in mind he could have planned to elucidate the letters in the biography itself. The compilation with its copious commentary seems to have taken its present shape in the final ten months before publication. It was written quickly, often without due consideration, reflection or research. Although it would not be fair to call the commentary an afterthought, it probably was not part of Carlyle's original intention in collecting the letters and speeches. These aspects of Carlyle's method are touched on by Carlyle's friend James Spedding, who wrote (15 April 1845) to his brother:

> Carlyle is not so well rid of his preliminary book as I had supposed. He has been adding his commentary as he revised the proofs, and finds the book so much more interesting than he had expected that he has been led to dilate more than he reckoned on -- and now he discovers that if he goes on at that rate the book will be far bigger than he can afford, and does not know what to do, but foresees that he will have a hard battle of it before he is done.[3]

This reveals some uncertainty and lingering indecision in carrying out what appears to be a definite purpose. It can also be seen somewhat more positively -- as Carlyle refusing to hold to an initial purpose which he felt no longer workable or suited to his message. Nonetheless, the impression the working papers of Cromwell give is that it was not so much the result of concerted effort and even progression as the product of disparate and at times despairing efforts to "get on." He could collect the letters and speeches: but how were they to be presented? In no other work did Carlyle struggle so merely to decide what it was he was writing about. Much of that struggle is evident in the early working papers, although somewhat surprisingly, the same difficulties were not nearly as evident in Carlyle's day-to-day life.

Two friends Carlyle made at roughly the same time -- early 1844 -- testify strongly to Carlyle's ordered and peaceful routine when writing Cromwell. Espinasse reports, "Carlyle's daily life, especially if he were writing a book, was, when I first knew him, simplicity, not to say monotony, itself." Normally Carlyle would work in his study from late mid-morning until about three in the afternoon. These five hours or so were occasionally interrupted by "properly introduced" strangers or "familiar" friends. One suspects a fair portion of Carlyle's correspondence was then completed, perhaps in an effort to "build up" to the more important writing of the moment. Thereafter, Carlyle would walk or ride until five, "well pleased if he had a more or less intelligent companion." In view of the misanthropy often associated with Carlyle it is surprising to learn "there seldom failed to be a guest or two" at the tea-table and callers were welcome in the evening for conversation, a good pipe and, at

the acknowledged departure time of ten o'clock, another walk often as far as Hyde Park Corner.[4]

David Masson confirms this pleasant routine in all particulars. Although Carlyle was then "in the throes of" Cromwell:

> I do not remember any evening when I found the least sign of flurry or fatigue of engrossing work in his domestic surroundings or demeanour. He seemed always to have transacted his sufficient quantum of pen-labour, whatever it was, during the day; there was never any litter of books or papers, or other evidence of pressing toil, . . . and, though he might be reading some volume when you entered, it was at once laid aside, and he was ready for tea and talk with you, or for talk alone, or talk and a smoke.[5]

Five years earlier Carlyle had told his mother about his daily comings and goings (24 Oct. 1839). The routine is remarkably similar to that described by his two friends, which shows Carlyle's procedure was habitual because comfortable. He enjoyed his walking or riding; visits, however, were not an equal delight: "once or twice in the week somebody steps-in in the evening, and that is abundantly enough for me. I like fully better to spend the evening in reading than with the average of company." Of his daily writing he said: "When I have written a tolerable morning's task, I feel entirely peaceable and content; when I have <u>not</u>, it is not so well, but I must just hope to do better next day!"[6] Carlyle tried to keep his writing separate from the rest of his day. If there were pen-troubles he made an effort to leave them at his desk until the next morning, although he was not always successful in suppressing his frustration. Still, he knew when he worked best and made his greatest effort then.

There were interruptions to the routine, no doubt sometimes routine in themselves. At one point he notes accompanying Jane to the railway station.[7] At another he was forced "to go into the city" to tend to finances. "Alas" he then lamented, "I have already lost my day for writing."[8] There were trips to the London Library and British Museum for research materials, but especially after he had retained John Christie, most of this legwork was delegated to that hapless ~~drone~~ drudge while Carlyle worked with the considerable resources he had at Cheyne Row.

Carlyle's routine provided him with a comfortable plan for writing, and more importantly, the way in which he read and wrote eventually proved ideal for the structure of Cromwell. In the Historical Sketches we necessarily see an episodic treatment of history. Grasshopper-like, Carlyle jumps from one event to another. Often years pass between anecdotes. There is no flow from one event to the next, whatever else may be said of his writing.

This method is more one of digging post-holes than of ploughing a field but it was part of the way he came to understand the period, then write about it. Once he was reasonably securely settled into compiling the edition the advantage of this routine became apparent. For the collecting of letters and the mining of necessary information for their elucidation, and refinement of this raw material into copy was similar to the routine Carlyle always tried to follow. The letters provided natural divisions, the gaps in them natural niches for narrative, and the different eras of Cromwell's life and the course of the Commonwealth all provided obvious halting points. Carlyle was able to work on whatever period or letter happened to be before him at a certain time, since he was used to

an approach that was not always chronological or strictly ordered. Common sense does indicate, however, that at some point, presumably after most of the material had been put in order, revisions became more chronological.

The two earliest letters in the collection offer examples of this effort to smelt raw material into copy. More importantly, they provide further insight into how Carlyle worked, and how through repeated trial and error he found an acceptable form for Cromwell. The treatment of these letters will be rather extensive due both to the copious available manuscript and also to the likelihood that it was in some halting writings relating to these particular letters that Carlyle reached a decision to center his work on the collected letters of Cromwell, which had for so long fascinated him.[9]

It will be remembered that the "Gropings About Montrose" contains comments on the obscurity of Cromwell's speeches and how, paradoxically, the man was more comprehensible as a result. The insight gained from the speeches is favorably mentioned in On Heroes. And in the Forster Collection there are four successive attempts in the space of a single sheet to discuss Cromwell's first letter. This remarkable effort comes immediately before a few draft paragraphs of Book II of Past and Present and was probably written in mid-October 1842. Three of the attempts are scored through; the fourth, many times longer than the others, is not, but was not ultimately used. Here are excerpts from three of the attempts:

> Chance, it is said, has often much to do with what men write, and then also with the handing down of the same. Men do not always write what thing was noteworthy, nay what image of a thing in their mind or memory was noteworthiest; and of what they do write none knows whether it shall be the most

> or the least significant that is preserved. . . . Oliver Cromwell had thoughts in him, it may be presumed, prior to his six & thirtieth year, and of quite other pregnancy than this of Mr Wells and Mr Storie at the Sign of the Dog in the Exchange.
>
> From amid the extensive shoals of drift wreck named Sloan Ms, for the Sea of Time is like other Seas, and saves or drowns almost indiscriminately, this piece of paper has been snatched; and with deep regret for the many better that have perished and are swallowed unattainable, is here set before the reader, "To Mr Storie at the Dog -- Oliver Cromwell." (Harris page 12).
>
> On the eleventh day of jany 1636 . . . -- In some small chamber, warmed with wood faggots, in a house on the south outskirts of St Ives, sits a robust middle-aged man, penning this epistle. By intense inspection something of the man can be discerned. . . . The reader anxiously perusing this fragment of written record, will not find it too satisfactory. Mr Storie is dead and vanished to the last vestige of him: discernable only that he verily was, and verily is not. "Sign of the Dog at the Royal Exchange:" alas the Royal Exchange has been twice burnt to dust since then; and the pigments that formed some kind of Dog, and the brushes and hand that laid them on, and all that boarded, that drank and congregated there, are fled -- and the whole world is fled farther than the dog star.[10]

Thus, from the "Gropings," through Heroes, to Past and Present and beyond, the letters and speeches were a source of constantly frustrated fascination.

Through 1843 the fascination was becoming stronger, as shown by a letter to Carlyle, dated 13 November 1843, in reply to one he had probably sent only a few days earlier. Carlyle's letter made inquiries about Cromwell's second letter (13 Oct. 1638) addressed to his cousin Mrs. St. John, then living at Otes Manorhouse. The reply from the Rev. Henry Sutton begins: "I have much pleasure in answering your questions concerning the Family of Masham, the Manor of Otes & the Tomb of Locke." Sutton went on to note that

the family was extinct and the tomb in "tolerably good preservation." The manorhouse had passed through several hands, and the grounds undergone many alterations. Carlyle actually quotes part of this letter in Cromwell[11] but in being able to date precisely his inquiry we see again how important Cromwell's letters were becoming to him.

At the time of this letter Carlyle was busy writing and also revising earlier drafts for his history. Reading them over must have caused no small discouragement. The fragments before him were poor compensation for four years' struggle. They did not capture the heroic nature of Cromwell and Puritanism, although Carlyle was convinced this was the most singular fact of the period.

On 4 December Carlyle wrote an anguished letter to Sterling. "I am doomed to write some Book about that unblessed Commonwealth" he began, then continued with his usual frustrated lament, "and as yet there will no Book shew itself possible." Later in the same letter he became more philosophical and expatiated on the benefits a change of setting would have on his ability to write:

> I wish among your buildings, you would build me some small Prophet's Chamber, fifteen feet square, with a separate garret and flue for smoking; within a furlong of your big house; sacred from all noises, of dogs, cocks, pianofortes and insipid men . . . a man might write there all day to some purpose, and cheer himself by talk all evening! But it cannot be. There is no such city of refuge, I am told, till once we get beyond the Zodiac; so in the mean time we must study to go on without it.[12]

The sentiment is quaint, and one which Carlyle often expressed, especially in his longing for the days of quiet accomplishment at Craigenputtoch. Its mention here provides a vital clue to dating a manuscript draft which again shows Carlyle's interest in the letters of Cromwell. In the manuscript Carlyle writes:

> Were I an English nobleman of distinction, I would seek some man of genius, were such for love or money to be had; seek him not without passionate earnestness . . . and having found /him/, I would put him in some upper room in some wing building of my Manorhouse, with these seven folios /of the Thurloe Papers/ and others; and say to him: See, The beautiful eternal sky is over thee, around are graceful boskages, smooth-shaven lawns and solitudes: the old housekeeper . . . will boil thy kettle; grill thy modicum of mutton; this lackey has it in charge to . . . watch argus-eyed that no interruption approach, that there be means and appliances, tobacco with pipes, ink paper, and a silence as of the gods. . . . Alas! My man of genius proves a Son of Dryasdust.[13]

Clearly, the letter and manuscript probably were written about the same time -- late 1843. Yet immediately before this vision of a scholar's paradise in his draft, Carlyle had been attempting to elucidate an early letter of Cromwell's. He had probably been reading selectively in the seven volume Collection of the State Papers by John Thurloe, Cromwell's State Secretary, almost certainly in the set borrowed from John Forster.[14] The documents it contains are naturally of varying importance, but did include many of Cromwell's letters. Carlyle began this manuscript draft account by relating how the fearful Thurloe had hidden his papers away in a garret ceiling at the Restoration. Yet Carlyle's account of this incident and the papers' subsequent discovery is vague: he does not know the exact address of the lodgings where the manuscripts were hidden, and has them being discovered by a law student, although in fact it was a clergyman. Their later provenance is also glossed over. Although many of the papers were unimportant, Carlyle continued, "We at the very door of it however have snatched the following morsel (quote the letter here. -- Will that do to begin with? Ach!)"[15] The letter referred to is Cromwell's to Mrs. Oliver St. John, ultimately the second in Carlyle's collection. It begins volume one of Thurloe,

hence the doorstep snatching of it. So, in early December 1843 Carlyle was once again toying with the idea of using some of the letters in the history in which he was then engaged.

Carlyle's fascination with the letters is not that difficult to explain. For in all his researches he was interested in original documents -- provided they were properly printed and readily accessible. He realized he needed primary information to gain a proper picture of life in the past and even at one point spoke of the need for a pamphletary history of the civil wars, gleaned perhaps from the King's Pamphlets.[16] The best documents for understanding the past, as well as the easiest to grasp, were journals and letters. They were capable of offering the most immediate and vivid sense of a past event, when thoughtfully written.

In his research Carlyle worked with a variety of primary sources. He was fascinated by D'Ewes' Journals and notes relating to the Long Parliament.[17] He waded through Thurloe, Whitelocke and the Somers Tracts. Yet his greatest fascination was with the early letters of Cromwell. They stimulated his interest and imagination, as the drafts show. And the more important Cromwell became to Carlyle, the more important his letters became as well. By late 1843 he was coming to realize that the period had no more important documents to offer than Cromwell's letters. They emphatically expressed his religious nature, and by implication the religious nature of the rebellion. Such ideas were dear to Carlyle and perfectly epitomized his view of the period.

It appears then, that in repeatedly attempting to put the letters into a brief sketch, Carlyle, even as he had been busy with other sketches, was slowly finding that he needed to alter his

conception from full-length history based on sketches to a collection of letters centering on Cromwell. It took some time before Carlyle realized that instead of merely using the letters incidentally in his history he could make them the history. Using them as a basis his way would be clearer, his intentions more evident, his purpose in writing more easily realized. For the moment though, he had still not made this decision.

During the first part of December Carlyle carried on with this design of using the letters in his history. More attempts at detailing the "Discovery of the Thurloe Papers"[18] were made, again including the letter to Mrs. St. John. A description here also includes a discussion of the earlier letter of Cromwell's to Mr. Storie:

> So then the learned Oliver St. John Chief Justice that is to be (some other page -- Oliver sitting alone in Ely; all Ely grown silent around him &c) (And the other letter about Mr Storie in Noble or Harris?)
>
> Much remains obscure, lost beyond recovery. Alas, the very spirit of the writing, how is it lost too; and the abstract words become as meaningless to us as are the lost proper-names. None now knows Mr Story, can find Mr Wrath in Epping, or make inquiry for anybody at the Sign of the Dog in the Exchange. The Exchange has been twice burnt since that time.[19]

In this group of manuscripts there are still further attempts to elucidate the second letter of Cromwell's, all of which, since they deal with the same letter, and are written from a similar point of view, probably came during this period of upheaval in November-December 1843 when Carlyle found it necessary to redefine his purpose in writing. In any event, they show the almost magnetic pull the letters continued to exercise on him.

By late December Carlyle had come to a decision and was actively engaged in a collection of Cromwell's letters. A list of those to be found in the intimidating folios of Thurloe is dated 27 December 1843 by Carlyle.[20] Almost a fortnight later, on 9 January 1844 Carlyle wrote to FitzGerald of his new purpose. "One of the things I have at length got to discern as doable is the gathering of all Oliver's Letters and Speeches, and stringing them together according to the order of time."[21] At last his new purpose had taken definite shape.

In Cromwell Carlyle writes "It was, many years ago," reading Cromwell's speeches "with a feeling they must have been credible when spoken," that "the Commonwealth, and Puritan Rebellion generally, first began to be conceivable."[22] Carlyle finally recognized that if the letters and speeches gave him that insight they might similarly alter others' conceptions. And he must further have realized that his repeated attempt to elucidate Cromwell's early letters was an unconscious acknowledgement of the utility of that approach. Once committed to it Carlyle had an ordered framework on which he could spin his narrative, then embroider it with commentary. Or, in his own words and metaphor, the letters were "a series of final rock-summits."[23] His attempt at a history of the period had failed to satisfy, although he persisted in his efforts with it for a long time. Of all his attempts to spark the kindling that was his reading and research into a purposeful flame-picture it was at last only a few sticks rubbed together which finally blazed. These were Cromwell's two early letters. More than anything else, it was Carlyle's fascination with them that led to Cromwell as we know it.

Yet the creative fire did not automatically reduce Carlyle's efforts to the Cromwell we know. There was continuing uncertainty over what the compilation would contain. The "Introduction" to Cromwell was probably arranged in its present form about the time the decision to publish the compilation as a separate book was made in February 1845. Early in 1844, while still in the initial stages of the compilation Carlyle's plan was probably to include this information in the still-to-be-written biography. Yet the correct proportions for the work were not to be easily defined.

This is evident from another draft for letter two, written, according to Carlyle's date, in 1844, and probably, due to its rough state coming fairly early in that year.[24] The main reason why it should be seen as a preliminary draft aside from the date, is its length. It runs to twenty folio pages and is still incomplete. In content it is roughly similar to the account eventually printed; its length is due to added detail. One suspects that while Carlyle was still attempting to find solid footing early in 1844 he simply began writing what he felt would be a useful explanatory account for this letter. It was later when he realized how bloated his book had become with his continual additions of commentary that he nearly halved his copy for this letter. In early 1844 with the memory of recently revising or writing much of the historical sketches so vivid, the desire to use some of the material from this laid-aside manuscript was strong. Since many of the events detailed in them happened about the time of the first letters written by Cromwell Carlyle found it quite natural to summarize some of this history in his "elucidations" to the letters. Two examples are the cropping of Bastwick, Burton and Prynne's ears, and the legend

surrounding Jenny Geddes. Other events only sketchily alluded to or ignored in the historical sketches, including the draining of the fens, or Hampden's shipmoney trials, are in this draft for letter two introduced and expanded upon. Carlyle was making use of his earlier material, while also adding new information. When his "Introduction" was revised in early 1845 he probably also put the finishing touches on the elucidations to letter two. The commentary to the first two letters and the Introduction were as a result, made more compact and concise.

One may fairly ask why, if Carlyle was planning an edition to be followed by a biography, he found it necessary to write such lengthy draft commentary, when presumably all could be explained to greater advantage in the later book. A perfectly satisfactory answer cannot be given. One reason is certainly the great importance Carlyle attached to these two letters, especially for their insight into Cromwell's sincere piety. This forms the main theme of Carlyle's commentary and interpretation. If the reader was not convinced of this by reading these letters he would probably never be. Therefore, extensive explanation was necessary, any biography notwithstanding. Secondly, it is doubtful how committed Carlyle was to his dual goal of a compilation to be followed by a biography, or, if he was, how far he had thought out his procedure. He was certainly still feeling his way. While his plan was workable, it was also alterable. Finally, one cannot help but sense that Carlyle knew he was at last making positive progress, and that his extended commentary was also an extended revel over a satisfactory plan.

Much has been gained from this look at the probable steps in Carlyle's decision that he should compile an edition of Cromwell's

letters and speeches. The time was a critical one in forming the plan for Cromwell. It was a time of revision, redefinition and redirection. Carlyle's ideas were in flux and his pen and mind constantly in motion. He was able to seize a subject only after abandoning his old approach, while his eventual decision owes perhaps an equal debt to continued effort, inspiration and the letters of Cromwell themselves. In a sense Carlyle was at his most professional and amateurish during the writing of Cromwell. He groped around for an "approach" to his subject like a dilettante struggling over a never-to-be-completed novel. Like the professional he was, he persevered until he got it right. His energy produced the friction that caused the spark that lit the flame-picture. And the rest, as they say, is his history.

Yet further insight into Carlyle the writer can be gained from examining other working papers. The first and most dramatic tendency in them is towards condensation. Carlyle consistently shortened the length of his elucidations. Cromwell itself is filled with comments about the limitations of space. At one point Carlyle introduces "as briefly as possible" a few dates. Later, further information must be given "in spite of our strait limits." And again, "Brevity is very urgent upon us;" nevertheless, an extract will be given.[25] The draft for letter two and its counterpart in Cromwell, and the historical sketches compared to their far briefer summary in Cromwell are also examples of this.

Further evidence comes in drafts for the elucidations to letters 193 and 194. Both are dated 16 May 1654, and relate to Colonel Alured, a distinguished soldier in the Parliamentary cause who developed an unfortunate proclivity to give loud voice to

radical republican sentiments. So loud in fact that they reached the ear of the Protector, and so radical that he thereupon wrote these letters demanding the recall, cashiering and effectual imprisonment of the Colonel.[26] In Carlyle's published account he devotes about a page and a half to detailing these circumstances, giving also something of the genealogy of the Alured family, and commenting on these unfortunate misguided men. Yet the draft account, at times corresponding to the printed version, runs to four full sides. It contains much biographical information, including the fate of the Colonel up to the Restoration, and ends with a heated denunciation of the restored king, implying that were it not for republicans like Alured, the wise Protectorate of Cromwell might have lasted longer.[27] No doubt Carlyle was wise to abridge.

Condensation is also evident in the elucidations of a letter of 25 December 1650, to another officer, the regicide Francis Hacker.[28] In Cromwell Carlyle's commentary covers scarcely a page, while his draft again fills both sides of two sheets. Once more there is some correspondence between manuscripts and text. In the draft Hacker's career is outlined down to his execution. An extended quotation from Hacker's scaffold speech quietly reaffirming his clear conscience and the justness of his actions serves as Carlyle's commentary on the Restoration. It is possible that Carlyle may at one point have meant to use more of this material since he has written a note on the last sheet stating "Beginning of this is p. 63 of Printer's Copy," which could be an indication the whole of this section was once intended for printing.[29] What caused Carlyle to reduce can only be surmised, but his awareness of his elucidations' exponential growth, and the unwieldiness his book would have, both in terms of

size and continuity of text were everything included, must have been critical in his decision.

At first glance it seems a contradiction that Carlyle's friends should write of his complaints of the mushrooming of Cromwell while he at the same time was so drastically pruning it. This apparent contradiction is resolved by remembering the probable initial purpose of a spare, stark compilation. When he found he needed to add more than "a few words of his own to each" letter he also found the nature of the compilation was changing from a spare edition to a fully annotated one. The "few words" grew to many pages, while in condensing these drafts Carlyle did struggle to make his commentary as concise as possible.[30] Any commentary at all, in light of the initial purpose would be deemed excessive, especially when a biography was to follow the compilation, hence Carlyle's complaints.

The next aspect of Carlyle as writer to emerge from working papers shows the same element of condensation, but brings out more clearly how Carlyle rearranged and reworked his material into a tighter, more cohesive and coherent narrative. The first example concerns material relating to Oliver's ancestry, especially his disputed descendance from Thomas Cromwell, the "Mauler of Monasteries" in Henry VIII's reign. Three full pages in draft[31] are heavily revised and somewhat disjointed. Carlyle was evidently researching this subject in late December 1843, for at that time he confessed in a letter to George Craik "I am at a kind of fix as to Cromwell's genealogy." He went on to mention the previous day's visit to the British Museum where he examined a letter of Thomas Cromwell's eventually quoted in Cromwell.[32] The actual writing of this draft, however, probably came about a year later, for Carlyle has noted

on the draft that he should "write to Redwood" concerning some queries. Redwood was Charles Redwood, a Welsh attorney and friend to whom Carlyle did write on 3 and 27 January 1845.[33]

A comparison of the manuscript with the text offers several conclusions. There is condensation. Much of the genealogical information Carlyle relates in draft is omitted in the text because it was wrong. Carlyle went about proving this in the draft, and once he had done it must have felt it better to omit this extraneous material. He also omits most of the biographical information on Thomas Cromwell. Apart from this there is considerable re-working of useable material. The order of paragraphs is shifted; portions of one are tacked onto another, and words and phrases are dropped in favor of more striking language. The narrative is made tighter, more to the point, more Carlylean.

This alteration of style is shown to greater advantage in a longer draft of commentary on letter one, which is a closer antecedent to the final text than the genealogical draft.[34] It covers nine full sides and also contains two small slips of paper containing revised copy pasted onto the larger sheets. Though there are thirteen paragraphs in the draft and sixteen in the text the draft is slightly longer than the text. Carlyle simply divided in two some of the longer draft paragraphs. Care and effort in molding his writing into a satisfying narrative are the keynotes to Carlyle's revisions.

The two most prominent features are reordering of some paragraphs between manuscript and text and a retention, virtually unchanged, of much of the original draft. Nine of the sixteen paragraphs correspond closely in text and draft. Carlyle was evidently pleased with much he had written since it was not substantially altered.

At the same time there were sections which caused him a great deal of trouble and show some uncertainty about what information to include. Finally, in a few instances going from manuscript to text Carlyle has made some additions. To two paragraphs he adds an introductory sentence and the entire account receives a new concluding paragraph which provides a link between it and the next letter in the compilation.

The three opening paragraphs of comment on letter one describe in a graphic and charming manner the physical setting of the town of St. Ives.[35] Arriving at this narrative took great effort. The draft corresponding to this portion of the account only approximates its final form. Passages are written, heavily revised, then abandoned and revised copy pasted over them. The order of the paragraphs in draft is confusing. At some points there is unnecessary antiquarian detail. Carlyle had ridden to St. Ives in September 1842, taken notes on the village, probably spoken to some of the locals, and retained much of the physical setting in his mind. This flood of memory briefly got the better of him in the draft, for much of the setting described there is deleted in the text. The ordering of the description as a whole is also changed. The text begins with the layout of the town, the draft with the location of Cromwell's lands within it. The revised order is certainly better since it moves from the general to the particular in an orderly manner.

Condensation and shifting of passages are again both evident. In one section of the draft there is a long portion detailing the history of lectureships and lay impropriations, both of which are referred to in letter one itself. This account is omitted in the printed text of letter one. Although this would certainly have

been a suitable place for this information, the omission is justified because in Cromwell Carlyle chose to deal with it in his "Introduction." In the text to letter one Carlyle refers to what was printed earlier while summarizing it in a sentence.[36] Exactly why he made this change is uncertain, since it would fit well in either place. It does seem possible it may have had to do with the length of the commentary compared to the letters themselves. Even in its pared-down state the commentary to the two letters outstrips them by about eight words to one. At the same time the "Introduction" has the virtue of continuity, while the piecemeal parceling out of historical information letter by letter could ultimately detract from their effectiveness. Obviously, exactly how to order his information was a difficult decision for Carlyle and also one which needed to be made again and again.

In these instances Carlyle suffered as all historians do at times, from a superabundance of information and a corresponding desire to present as much of it as possible. He had to select and edit with care. At other times his sources turned up virtually no information. Often when this happened Carlyle's imagination took over his writing in a strange way, although this invariably came earlier in the research for Cromwell, before his work had pointed direction. Noted earlier were some of Carlyle's random speculations made at a time when his muse was imprisoned, when Oliver was "like an iceberg."[37] There are also the curious attempts to dramatize Cromwell's life. Other occasions found Carlyle speculating on how things he could not confirm through any source must have been. Early in his research (7 Oct. 1841) Carlyle created a dialogue between

the elusive Jenny Geddes and an unnamed companion, turning on Charles and Laud's attempt to force conformity on the Scottish church with the introduction of a new prayer book. All Carlyle's efforts to find convincing proof of Jenny's existence failed, yet he continued to believe in her as mythic, and valued highly the symbolic significance of her alleged stool-throwing. Here he imagines what caused her to act as she did:

> J/enny/. Prentin said ye?
> A. Evan Tyler told me. Every parish is to have two; one for the Minister's use; one at least to be studied by the flock. --
> /J/ Wae light on't?
> /A/ Have not chief magistrates the right to prescribe order in their Kirks?
> /J/ Their Kirk? It is your kirk and my kirk. Will Charles Stewart answer for me at the Great Day?
> /A/ Janet, ye take things o'er strict.[38]

More often Cromwell himself was the subject of speculation. Carlyle's curiosity about Cromwell's boyhood and youth was continually frustrated. Only the scrap noting his matriculation at Cambridge, and a brief marriage record survived. Aside from this there were legends of tom-foolery and debauchery which were mainly the products of vivid Restoration imaginations. What was Cromwell's life, Carlyle muses, then continues:

> Scene in the Dolphin Tavern, in the Mermaid Tavern. I knew this man as a student of Law, a young Templar (incipient Lawyer). I have seen him in the Dolphin Tavern in the Md Tavn and elsewhere. (A riotous kind of man, for in that great greedy heart there lay capacity to have become a first-rate Taverner and have died swiftly of brandy. . . . Loud are they all; loudest is my poor Oliver, -- rope-dancing here as over the throat of the Abyss. Should he fall, should he fall![39]

Somewhat later in Cromwell's life, after he had "settled down" he was plagued with melancholic fits, which Carlyle rendered dramatically:

> Patient. O Doctor, O Doctor; O I -- oh-h-h! --
> D/octor/ Well, Mr Cromwell, what is it now? Courage, my good friend!
> P. O Doctor, there is Death in this body of mine, or a spirit not of this earth: words are weak.
> D. How do you feel?
> P. The whole Pit is let loose agt me. As if my veins were all full of clay, as if I were baking in a furnace into stone.
> D. Come now; there is no fear of that. Have you pain anywhere?
> P. I am all one horrible unnameable pain. But that is not it. Oh no. I could suffer pain. The Pit is loose against me; God has given the Devils powers.
> D. How mean you?
> P. Voices, faces: detestable spirits, one glass-eyed gorgon-face, I know it, I know it of old: turn as I will there it is; and something shouts always as into my inner ear Stone, Stone, thou art changing into Stone, a monument of God's just wrath; -- and ever I think somehow about the Stone-cross as if I -- and know not what to think.
> W/ife/ O Oliver!
> P. Yes, Dame: thou knowest it not.
> D. Stone-cross? Ah, I see! Good Mrs Cromwell (aside in a whisper) What was there to dinner? (Mrs Crom whispers; the Dr nodding, and again questioning).
> P. Oh-h-h-h!
> -- -- -- And now in short does not the Dr write out his placebo, drastic, cathartic . . . and already with soothing words with confident face of hope infuse some composure into Mr Cromwell.[40]

In this instance there was a report of Cromwell's hypochondria in Sir Philip Warwick's Memoirs (London, 1701), which Carlyle knew from an early date in his researches. However, this account with its scene and accompanying dialogue is obviously fictional.

A final example shows Carlyle freely speculating on Cromwell's boyhood, a subject about which little was known. In a long draft Carlyle discerns from portraits of Cromwell's parents their character.

Then the evening household is lovingly detailed. Mrs. Cromwell "sitting with her seam by the social candle, while Mr. Cromwell reads divinity, and the children romping about have not yet got to bed: it is a sight worth glancing at from such a distance." Little Oliver is characterized -- on what basis it is difficult to say: "A stirring little fellow; yet probably with fits of taciturnity; wild joy and affection alternating in him with wild rage and grief; -- given somewhat, I should guess, to fits of crying."[41] Carlyle also imagines visits to nearby relatives, among them "A slim handsome clear-eyed boy" named John Hampden.[42] None of these speculations is transferred to Cromwell. Of this time in Cromwell's life Carlyle merely writes "Readers of lively imagination can follow him on his bird-nesting expeditions . . . and elsewhither if they choose."[43]

Of course Carlyle is one of the readers of "lively imagination." Even when materials for constructing a scene were lacking he, magician-like was able to conjure one from nothing. It is, nonetheless, to Carlyle's credit that these speculations are omitted in Cromwell. Part of the reason for this is the limitation of space. More important was Carlyle's decision to bind himself to elucidating the letters, which forced him to be succinctly factual. Still another reason was Carlyle's realization that the speculations were simply that. So much falsehood perpetuated at Cromwell's expense was the result of just such speculation; any further, even if favorable, would be a burden. Finally, one suspects some of these papers were Carlyle's attempts to insert himself into Cromwell's time and temperament. Like the armchair tourist, he tried to visualize a subject about which he could only read and imagine. For certainly

Carlyle's approach to history was in part an imaginative one. As is shown in chapter seven many aspects of his style have more in common with imaginative literature than narrative prose. As is shown below he tends to embellish or even emend the facts found in his sources. While this is often due to imprecise research, at times it was probably done for the more graphic effect it created. However accurate Carlyle attempted to be, his imagination was always an active force molding his presentation of the facts and at times the facts themselves. When there were no facts as such to be molded, as in the case of most of the foregoing examples, the imagination worked with what inferences could be made. The results were these sorts of sketches, all wisely omitted in their form from Cromwell, and indeed, probably never part of any history Carlyle wrote. Certainly he realized that once imagination took final control of his writing the result, however entertaining, could no longer be termed history.

Carlyle's working papers tell us much about how he probably wrote. He usually had a comfortable routine for his writing. Within this framework he struggled with his topic and eventually decided to edit Cromwell's letters. Working papers show that he condensed, revised and reordered his preliminary drafts quite heavily. At times he speculated too freely on events about which little could be known with certainty but much imagined. His method, as it defines itself, is hardly objectionable, but the immediate question it raises is "How well did it work?" Only the published text can tell us this.

Before beginning it must be admitted a comprehensive examination of the full work is not attempted. Such a study would form a thesis

in itself. The inquiry is far more selective, examining relatively brief sections of prose. If Carlyle's accuracy has been the subject of much speculation it has had little close attention. Critics not wishing to bother further with the matter jovially concede Carlyle's accuracy, sincerity and care taken with sources, then move on to other considerations.[44]

Yet, there are a few significant studies of Carlyle's accuracy. The most important one dealing with a purely historical work has been C. F. Harrold's "Carlyle's General Method in the French Revolution." A careful reading suggests that Harrold was too great an apologist for Carlyle's shortcomings, yet his conclusions are still useful. Carlyle's method, he begins, "was one of selection, transformation of original passages, and a careful placing in a vast word-picture" -- in a word, paraphrase. These paraphrases are almost always examples of sound workmanship with few instances of "embroidery" or fabrication. Under the label of "embroidery" is included indifference "to conflicting accounts in order to form the most vivid and dramatic version," "minor departures from original accounts," which are more accurately simple errors Carlyle has made, and an occasional violation of chronology. Harrold distinguishes between "pure fabrication" and "minor ornamentation" by claiming the former have no "basis in a source" while the latter can at least be inferred. He contends that only ten instances of "fabrication" exhaust that tendency in the French Revolution. Carlyle, in brief, stuck to the facts and used paraphrase for vividness, while the desire to be graphic in turn influenced what he chose to tell.[45]

In his study of the same subject David Sorensen has encountered

similar results, but interprets them less happily, saying that "History was subordinated to prophecy, and was made the vehicle of his own 'divine' vision." "Carlyle was obliged to twist his facts, and to disregard conflicts of interpretation in his sources." Sorensen continues "Carlyle ignored the conflicting evidence because it contradicted his own vision of the hero's divine role in history, as an agent of order and authority."[46]

Already in the French Revolution there are elements present in Carlyle's narrative that must make us question the favorable concessions made about his accuracy.[47] An examination of his writing in Cromwell further chips away this effigy of accuracy. It confirms his use of paraphrase and condensing information. In itself this is not objectionable, and is largely what one would expect. Yet, it becomes impossible not to conclude that when writing Cromwell Carlyle was somewhat indifferent to the sources from which he drew his material. His writing exhibits a lamentable imprecision in footnotes, obstinate inaccuracy in quotations and a maddening tendency to get the facts wrong.

Carlyle's use of paraphrase offers insight into his writing method. In most passages it is possible to trace through Carlyle's text the sources he must have used. He seems not to have thoroughly assimilated the material he wished to report, but chose merely to alter the manner in which it was expressed, almost always through more striking language, and the dramatic or poetic presentation of facts. The movements of Cromwell's army in Scotland some weeks before the battle of Dunbar may be taken as a typical example of Carlyle's use of his sources in this manner.

On Monday 22d July, the Army, after due rendezvousing and reviewing, passed through Berwick; and encamped at Mordington across the Border, where a fresh stay of two days is still necessary. Scotland is bare of resources for us. That night 'the Scotch beacons were all set on fire; the men fled, and drove away their cattle.' Mr. Bret, his Excellency's Trumpeter, returns from Edinburgh without symptom of pacification. 'The Clergy represent us to the people as if we were monsters of the world.' 'Army of Sectaries and Blasphemers,' is the received term for us among the Scots.

We passed through Berwick; and, marching over the bounds came to Mordington, where we encamped. /The Scottish farmers/ have prized all the corn and grass near the borders, and given the people warning, upon our approach, to flee away northward, and draw their goods with them.[48]

Albeit the Lord has suffred that armey of perfideous and blasphemous sectaries to prevail /at Dunbar/.[49]

Mr Bret, his Excellencies trumpeter, returned yesterday from Edenburgh, he saith, that as he went and came when he passed through their towns that had any forces in them, they blindfolded him that he could not see; he delivered the declaration to the Committee of Estates at Edenburgh, who returned a lardainlike answer, that they will send an answer by a messenger of their own.[50]

The next morning a trumpeter came from the Scots army, but to little purpose. The beacons were all set on fire that night; the men fled, and drove away their cattle.[51]

Already on the march hitherward, and now by Mr. Bret in an official way, have due Manifestos been promulgated: Declaration To all that are Saints and Partakers of the Faith of God's Elect in Scotland, and Proclamation To the People of Scotland in general. Asking of the mistaken People, in mild terms, Did you not see us, and try us, what kind of men we were, when we came among you two years ago? Did you find

We therefore reckon it no Breach, but a religious Keeping, of the Covenant according to the Equity thereof, when our Parliament, for Religion and Liberty's Sake, and the Interest of the People, did remove the King and Kingship. As also we assert ourselves Keepers of the Covenant, when the Competition hath been between the Form and Substance, if we have altered some forms of the Government in part for the Substance Sake.

us plunderers, murderers, monsters of the world? 'Whose ox have we stolen? To the mistaken Saints of God in Scotland, again, the Declaration testifies and argues, in a grand earnest way, That in Charles Stuart and his party there can be no salvation; that we seek the real substance of the Covenant, which it is perilous to desert for the mere outer form thereof; -- on the whole, that we are not sectaries and blasphemers; and that it goes against our heart to hurt a hair of any sincere servant of God. -- Very earnest Documents, signed by John Rushworth in the name of General and Officers; often printed and reprinted. They bear Oliver's sense in every feature of them; but are not distinctly of his composition: wherefore, as space grows more and more precious, and Oliver's sense will elsewhere sufficiently appear, we omit them.

We think fit therefore, for the clearing of ourselves, to remind you of our former Deportment and Behaviour; when, about two years since, we entered into the Kingdom of Scotland, and then carried in by the Hand of Divine Providence, and through the earnest Invitation of those now in present Authority and Power with you, What Injury or Wrong did we then do, either to the Persons, Houses, or Goods of any? Whose Ox have we taken?[52]

'The Scots,' says Whitlocke, 'are all gone with their goods towards Edinburgh, by command of the Estates of Scotland, upon penalty if they did not remove; so that mostly all the men are gone. But the wives stay behind; and some of them do bake and brew, to provide bread and drink for the English Army.' The public functionaries 'have told the people, "That the English Army intends to put all the men to the sword, and to thrust hot irons through the women's breasts"; -- which much terrified them, till once the General's Proclamations were published.' And now the wives do stay behind, and brew and bake, -- poor wives!

Letters that the Scots were all gone with their Goods towards Edenburgh, by Command of the States of Scotland; upon pain of being sequestered, and declared Enemies, if they did not remove, so that for the most part, all the men were gone.

But the Wives stayed behind, and some of them did bake and brew, to provide Bread and Drink for the English Army. That those imployed by the State of Scotland upon the Borders, tell the People, That the English Army intends to put all Men to the Sword, and to thrust hot Irons through the Woments Breasts, which much terrifyed them, till the General his Proclamations were published among them.[53]

That Monday night while we lay at Mordington, with hard accommodation out of doors and in, -- my puddingheaded friend informs me of a thing. The General has made a large Discourse to the Officers and Army, now that we are across; speaks to them 'as a Christian and a Soldier, To be doubly and trebly diligent, to be wary and worthy, for sure enough we have work before us! But have we not had God's blessing hitherto? Let us go on faithfully, and hope for the like still!' The Army answered 'with acclamations,' still audible to me. -- Yorkshire Hodgson continues:

'Well; that night we pitched at Mordington, about the House. Our Officers,' General and Staff Officers, 'hearing a great shout among the soldiers, looked out of window. They spied a soldier with a Scotch kirn' (churn) 'on his head. Some of them had been purveying abroad, and had found a vessel filled with Scotch cream: bringing the reversion of it to their tents, some got dish-fuls, and some hatfuls; and the cream being now low in the vessel, one fellow would have a modest drink, and so lifts the kirn to his mouth: but another canting it up, it falls over his head; and the man is lost in it, all the cream trickles down his apparel, and his head is fast in the tub! This was a merriment to the Officers; as Oliver loved an innocent jest.'[55]

The general made a large discourse to the officers on the bounds, shewing he spoke as a Christian and a soldier, and shewed the inconveniences we should meet with in the nation as to the scarcity of provisions; as to the people, we should find the leading part of them to be soldiers, and they were very numerous, and, at present, may be unanimous; and much to that purpose: And charged the officers to double, nay treble their diligence in that place, for . . . we had work before us.[54]

Well, that night we pitched at Mordington, about the house. Our officers were looking out at a window, hearing a great shout amongst the Soldiers, they spied a Soldier with a Scots kirn on his head. Some of them had been purveying abroad, and had found a vessel filled with Scots cream; and, bringing the reversions to their tents, got some dishfuls, and some hatfuls; and the cream growing low in the vessel, one would have a modest drink, and heaving up the kirn, another lifts it up, and the man was lost in it, and all the cream trickles down his apparel, and his head fast in the tub; this was a merriment to the officers, as Oliver loved an innocent jest.[56]

The conclusions of this comparison of text and source are readily apparent. Carlyle is largely faithful to his sources, often quoting directly, or seeming to effect direct quotation. Yet the style is his own. The information taken from several accounts is clipped and

pasted into a continuous narrative, rather than extensively revised, reworked or rephrased.

While this form of paraphrase is regularly employed there were two other kinds of narration which Carlyle used. The first, which is similar to paraphrase, can be called continuous narrative. The distinction between the two forms comes in the type of information Carlyle was attempting to convey. Paraphrase normally comes when he relates occurrences that cover a brief period of time, generally a few weeks, days or even hours, or when he sets the stage for a letter through a prolegomena of relevant information. The narrative comes when the period covered is longer in time, the issues discussed are more complex, and editorial interjections (often in the form of "anonymous" commentary) are interspersed. Narratives usually come as introductions to the various Books of Cromwell. Not all these elements need be present to make a narration, but normally a combination of them is. Examples include Carlyle's account of the "Army-Manifesto," the "Levellers," the accounts preceding the Irish and Scottish wars and the "Chronological" account of the Major-Generals' rule.[57] In these accounts Carlyle briefly summarizes the issues and swiftly returns to the elucidation of letters.

The third aspect of Carlyle's narration is perhaps more properly a means of effecting the first two but forms such a large part of Cromwell that it deserves mention. This is the frequent use of excerpts and direct quotations in the text, already in evidence in the account cited above. A full accounting for all the significant quotations of a few lines or longer would perhaps reduce Carlyle's own narrative by more than one quarter. These take the form of letters other than Cromwell's, Parliamentary orders, newspaper reports, or

eyewitness accounts of specific events. Some of the longer accounts include the section "In the Long Parliament," made up almost entirely of two excerpts covering four pages detailing Cromwell's actions in that assembly. The account of "Lowestoff" contains a long letter about that campaign by John Cory, instead of Carlyle's own summary of it. The history of "The Clubmen" is given, apart from an introductory paragraph, entirely by quotations from Rushworth and Sprigge. Even the account "Death of the Protector," one of the finest passages in all of Cromwell, resorts to direct quotation one third of the time.[58] Carlyle relied heavily on direct quotation for three reasons. First, he was writing under some pressure from his printer for copy while his own desire to complete his wearisome task is well-known. Excerpts provided a quick, easy way of meeting his obligations. Second, the accounts given are often quite vivid, graphically striking narratives which said best what Carlyle wanted to say. Finally, throughout his career Carlyle was fond of direct quotation, whether of himself or his sources, and his reliance on it here is to some extent standard procedure.

If it is through paraphrase, narration and direct quotation that Carlyle largely worked, more can be learned about his writing from closer scrutiny of his prose. In the first instance, the mechanics of his writing can be considered, specifically his use of footnotes. Carlyle's method of citation is generally complete, according to the somewhat less precise practices of his time. Normally when listing a source for the first time he gives the author's surname, an abbreviated title, and the year of publication or edition he uses. Sometimes the format of the book -- whether folio, quarto or octavo -- is also given.[59] By and large this information is sufficient,

although the citations at times become spotty, annoying or purposely imprecise. At one point Carlyle cites an "Old Pamphlet: Title mislaid and forgotten."[60] In another instance he cites from a French translation of a seventeenth century English history only to cite seven pages later the same history, but now from a nineteenth century English edition.[61] Also curious is his spare reference to "Scotch peerages" without any indication which ones, and no page references.[62] Similar to this is the citation relating to the character of Elizabeth Muir, mother of the Stuart line. In determining whether she was a "proper" female Carlyle (tongue in cheek perhaps) refers the reader to "Horseloads of Jacobite, Anti-Jacobite Pamphlets; Goodall, Father Innes, etc etc." then wryly adds "How it was settled, I do not recollect."[63] In these instances Carlyle was probably working from memory, citing information he may once have read and noted, but did not have the inclination or patience to search out again. A final example has Carlyle on one page citing a source but only offering bibliographical information in a later citation.[64] Strange indeed, but not too unexpected when no consistent method of citation is followed.

Looking more specifically at the information footnoted and comparing the sources cited to this information one finds the notes are frequently inaccurate. In many instances Carlyle has not listed all the sources he has used in preparing his narrative. The proof of this is fairly straightforward because of his tendency to paraphrase. Correspondence between source and text can easily be traced. When no source Carlyle cites corresponds closely to his text it is usually wise to look elsewhere for the correct one. In the passage cited above it is obvious upon checking that none of the cited sources refer

by name to Cromwell's messenger Mr. Bret. Yet Caulfield's Cromwelliana does, and the correspondence of these two texts, as well as Carlyle's heavy reliance on this book throughout Cromwell makes it obvious he was drawing on this work, although no attribution was given.[65] At another point Carlyle again plunders Caulfield without acknowledgement. Here the action centers on Winceby battle, especially the troop movements prior to it.[66] Finally, Carlyle's account of Pride's Purge as given in the first edition neglects to mention two of the most important sources used, Whitelocke's Memorials and Walker's History of Independency. It is significant that this particular oversight was vaguely rectified in the second and later editions.[67] Of all Carlyle's errors these of proper citation could most easily have been put right, but usually were not.

The same may be said of direct quotation, which Carlyle uses frequently and inaccurately. What he regularly did was to take a statement or clause from his source and paraphrase it within quotation marks. Sense is preserved, accuracy is not. In reporting the Earl of Manchester's appointment to head the Eastern Association Carlyle quotes that he was nominated "'Sergeant-Major of the Associated Counties'" while the correct version is "Sergeant Major Generall of all the Forces."[68] In Carlyle's account of the taking of the Solemn League and Covenant at St. Margaret's, Westminster in September 1643, which he initially dated incorrectly,[69] he quotes the Scots as calling up "all fencible men from sixteen to sixty" to give battle to the English royalists. Actually the quotation, which was taken from Rushworth though not attributed to him, reads "all the Fencible persons within this our Kingdom of Scotland, betwixt Sixty and Sixteen years of age."[70] One final example, and

this aspect of Carlyle's writing may be left. At one point he tells with a pious glee of the destruction in London of certain popish edifices. In his quotation from Vicars he writes the event was accompanied by "'troops of soldiers sounding their trumpets, and all the people shouting.'" In fact, Vicars says that "the work was both guarded and solemnized with brave bands of Souldiers, sounding their Trumpets, and shooting off their peeces, as well as shouting out with their voices." People were present, according to Vicars, but whether they were as jubilant as the soldiers is not stated.[72]

Carlyle's use of direct quotation, too often so far from accuracy that it is closer to paraphrase, is disturbing and confusing. An obvious conclusion is that Carlyle did not work with his sources close at hand and did not check quotations for accuracy. And it could be that Carlyle initially transcribed from his sources inaccurately, while further re-copyings only compounded the error, and lack of careful revisions confirmed it. All in all, inaccurate quotation is typical of Carlyle's writing. For whatever reason precision is rare.

This inaccuracy also spills over into the events Carlyle chooses to detail. Accuracy in matters of fact cannot be taken for granted in Cromwell. For example, misdating creeps in through careless reading. The taking of Bristol by Prince Rupert occurred, according to Carlyle, on 22 July 1643. The date is taken from Rushworth. Turning to that torpedo narrative one does find the notation in the margin summaries "Saturday, Ju'y 22. The taking of Bristol by Prince Rupert." However, a glance at the text itself shows the 22nd was actually the date on which Rupert began his siege. It was not until the 26th that his army "gained the Outworks, and made a

breach into the town" which led to terms.[73]

This is a relatively minor point, although Carlyle's reading led to more egregious blunders. In his account of Essex's relief of besieged Gloucester in late summer, 1643, Carlyle gives this brief, not unemotional account: Essex marched with his forces on 26 August "steadily along, in spite of rainy weather and Prince Rupert; westward, westward: on the night of the tenth day, September 5th, the Gloucester people see his signal-fire flame up, amid the dark rain, 'on the top of Presbury Hill'; -- and understand that they shall live and not die."[74] Carlyle cites two later collections of contemporary pamphlets which describe various aspects of the siege and relief operations. He notes specifically a pamphlet found in the Somers Tracts.[75] Although somewhat vague in detail it is clear from this pamphlet and the other source Carlyle has cited that his account is wrong. In Somers we read "They within /Gloucester/ . . . sent out two spies with a double signall; first one fire on the side of a hill, to signifie their escapes, and two fires on the same place, if they heard good newes; which latter was accordingly performed, and beheld by us." "This evening /5 Sept./ the lord-generall came to the brow of the hills seven miles from the town, and fired a warning piece, but by reason of the contrary winds the report was not heard, neither did the newes reach us that night."[76] From the other collection cited by Carlyle, who has incorrectly named its editor, the reader learns the Gloucester spies lit their fires on "Waynload-Hill" and that Essex came to "Presbury hils" and "discharged 4 peeces of great ordnance."[77] Thus, in this brief account Carlyle is repeatedly mistaken. The signal-fires came on the fourth, not the fifth, and were the work of spies from Gloucester,

not Essex's army, and it came on a hill different from the one Carlyle names.

Such inattention to detail comes also in a vague account, already alluded to, of the destruction of "Papisticall fopperies and trumperies in and about" London in May 1643. Carlyle places the destructive violence -- the tearing down of market crosses, other monuments, and burning of the Book of Sports -- on the same day. Actually, according to his sources, the demolition took about a week. Cheapside cross was first pulled down, then several days later the "leaden gods, Saints and Popes were cast" into a fire at Cheapside. More images were pulled down, and the Book of Sports and other objectionable books were ordered burnt by the common hangman at "the very place where that Romish-Crosse in Cheapside formerly stood."[78]

Sometimes it is not clear why Carlyle was wrong. For example, he sharply disparages George Bate's Elenchus Motuum.[79] In tracing the development of Cromwell's "Ironsides" Carlyle speculates soundly, if somewhat vaguely that Cromwell "all along, in the many changes his body of men underwent, had his eye upon this object of getting good soldiers and dismissing bad; and managed the matter by common practical vigilance, not by theatrical clap-traps as Dr. Bates /sic/ represents." Earlier he had airily accused Bate and unnamed others of "various romantic details on the subject, which deserve no credit."[80] Carlyle merely cites the title of Bate's work, which in itself is a tip-off he may have been working from memory. That his memory was faulty is clear from Bate's account:

> Wherefore Independents, Anabaptists, Quakers, . . . come flocking to him . . . who in the beginning being unskillful either in handling their Arms, or managing a Horse, by Diligence and Industry became in process of time most

> excellent Soldiers; for Cromwell used them daily to look after, feed, and dress their Horses, . . . taught them to clean and keep their Arms clear, and have them ready for Service, to chuse the best Armour, and to arm themselves to the best advantage. Trained up in this kind of Military Exercise, they excelled all their Fellow Soldiers in Feats of War, and obtained more victories over their Enemy. This was the beginning of the New Model.[81]

This is hardly claptrap or romance but the same "common practical vigilance" praised by Carlyle. He unfairly creates a false impression of his source in this instance because he was not as familiar with it as he thought he was.

A few final examples, and the matter of Carlyle's errors can be left. Pride's Purge is certainly the stuff of epic drama. It was a tense confrontation between military force and force of law, summary military justice and deliberative civilian rule. In Carlyle's account several of his "usual" errors are present. In the first edition he cites only Rushworth and Somers Tracts, although he also used Whitelocke and Walker's Anarchica Anglicana; or, The History of Independency, (London, 1648-9). This oversight, however, is corrected in the second and later editions.[82] Carlyle also quotes inaccurately several times. When questioned about the legality of the imprisonment of members of Parliament Carlyle has Hugh Peters, Cromwell's chaplain, reply "It is by the Law of Necessity; truly, by the Power of the Sword." Actually, the only statement attributable to Peters is the more laconic "By the power of the Sword."[83] The account of the seizure of members itself Carlyle draws from Whitelocke, but he embellishes the account, adding gestures, tone of voice, and direct quotation.

> Colonel Rich's horse stand ranked in Palaceyard, Colonel Pride's foot in Westminster Hall and at all entrances to the Commons House, this day: and in Colonel Pride's hand is a written list of names, names of the chief among the Hundred and twenty-nine; and at his side is my Lord Grey of Groby, who, as this Member after that comes up, whispers or beckons, 'he is one of them: he cannot enter!' and Pride gives the word, 'To the Queen's Court'; and Member after Member is marched thither. Colonel Pride drew up divers of his foot in the Court of Requests upon the stairs, and in the Lobby before the House, and as the Members were coming in to go into the House. Colonel Pride having a paper of names in his hand, and one of the Door-keepers, and sometimes the Lord Grey of Groby standing by him, and informing him who the Members were, the Colonel seized upon such of them as he was directed by his Note, and sent them away with Souldiers, some to the Queen's Court, and Court of Wards, and other places.[84]

A last example drawn from this account of Pride's Purge is one of outright error. The catalyst for the Purge was Parliament's vote to reject the Army Remonstrance on 30 November 1648. According to Carlyle the solemn response of the army to this vote was to spend "again 'a Day in Prayer.'" A touching example of piety, except that it is not true. One searches in vain for confirmation of this day of prayer following Parliament's vote. Finally, it becomes clear that Carlyle's misreading of Whitelocke is probably responsible. Under the date 27 November -- three days before the fateful vote -- Parliament received "Letters from the Headquarters, that the officers spent yesterday wholly in prayer; that they consult how to effect what is in their Remonstrance." Thus an event taking place before the vote is made the army's response <u>to</u> the vote.[85]

Such mistakes are one thing; fabrication is quite another. Unfortunately Carlyle is not blameless on this account either. To give brief examples: in his account of Cromwell's halting of the church service in Ely cathedral there is no source for the dialogue attributed to Mr. Hitch.[86] In the account of Cromwell's last

Parliament just prior to his speech dissolving it there is no basis for the Commons' question "Shall we take our Mace?"[87] And, in Cromwell's summary dismissal of the Rump, Carlyle dresses up Whitelocke's account of the conference the evening before:

> Bulstrode went home to Chelsea, very late, with the tears in his big dull eyes, at thought of the courses men were getting into.
>
> and this conference lasted until till late at night, when Widdrington and Whitelocke went home weary, and troubled to see the indiscretion and gratitude of those men, and the way they designed to ruin themselves.[88]

There really is no warrant for "dull Bulstrode's" tears.

Sadly, much of what Carlyle writes in Cromwell is wrong. In reviewing this litany of errors, misquotations, inaccurate attribution of sources and unwarranted embellishment of accounts cited, several conclusions may be drawn. First it must be re-emphasized that the foregoing examples have come from a more-or-less random investigation of Cromwell. Everywhere we broke ground we came to water. It is likely a more exhaustive search would disclose similar errors in equal abundance throughout the book. With this information before us due credit can perhaps be given to the assessment of Walter Rye, given in his writings on the Squire Papers. Carlyle, he asserts, "was a slipshod and inaccurate writer of history, and . . . mistakes simply abound in his Cromwell's Letters."[89] While these errors cannot be explained away, they need to be explained.

The great majority are simple errors of fact, which reflect primarily on Carlyle's research methods, particularly the manner in which he wrote. An examination of these misquotations and confused facts, as well as a careful screening of Carlyle's drafts

for Cromwell and the Historical Sketches, force one to conclude that Carlyle did not work directly from his sources when he wrote, especially in his first drafts. It is inconceivable that Carlyle could have written with texts before him opened to the relevant pages and then regularly copy incorrectly or tumble headlong into error. It is more likely, and paradoxically more to his credit to think that he read until he was saturated with a subject, closed his books, or at least moved them to the side, then let his account flow onto the paper. It is understandable as a method. What was wrong was that he did not check his sources once finished. What is wrong with the result is that it is almost inevitable that his accumulated mistakes color the whole impression he gives in his work. Most of them are insignificant in themselves, but collectively they mean that his writing could give way to bias based on errors without his being aware of it.

In summing up we can now see reasonably clearly how Carlyle wrote, what his general method in Cromwell was. He tended to elucidate letters as they came to him. Each letter demanded quite specific information, often about obscure army officers or other of the footnote folk of history. This was and is a laborious exercise for anyone, and Carlyle certainly attempted conscientiousness and diligence -- within the limits of his temperament. A final example of this comes in the previously cited manuscript regarding Colonel Alured. In addition to the narrative already discussed the account contains a few pages of reading notes with extensive citations and relevant information gleaned from several sources. Then, at one point during his attempts to weld together a worthwhile account of this information Carlyle notes "I have spent two weary days (4 & 5

Octr 1844) in hunting thro' the dirtiest labyrinths and bewildered continents of rubbish for some coherent image of this Alured."[90] This was Carlyle when his labor did not altogether please him. At another point he wrote one of the "principle" events of the day was "the partially successful deciphering of /a letter/ of Cromwell's."[91]

Carlyle's critics have often speculated about how he went about writing. Calder opines his method in the first draft of Past and Present was to write from memory. Firth seemingly agrees in his assessment of Cromwell: "The systematic steady jogtrot of the professional historian or man of letters was not possible to him. He could not, like Scott, say to himself that he would write so many hours before breakfast. . . . The history of Carlyle's Cromwell falls naturally into two stages; first of all a prolonged struggle to understand the subject, and lastly a shorter and more violent struggle -- almost a convulsion of nature -- to set forth the result to the world."[93] Although Carlyle did have a regular routine in writing, his research did take longer than his actual writing. One suspects Firth's view is taken from Carlyle's own letters, particularly one to Sterling. Here he wrote of the need for "a thorough intelligence of the fact to be . . . represented." It is not reasoned consideration that depicts the fact, but its "blazing within one, if it will ever get to blaze, and bursting to be out."[94] In another letter he confessed "in general when writing, I am surrounded with a rubbish of papers that have come to little: -- this only will come to much for all of us, To keep the thing you are elaborating as much as possible actually in your own living mind; in order that this same mind, as much awake as possible, may have a chance to make something of it."[95] His method then, was first of all a process of

assimilation, often including note-taking, reading of relevant sources, and then composition of his account from memory. It is this final reliance on memory that is most responsible for Carlyle's inexorable inaccuracy.[96]

Another reason for lack of careful revision was the pressure of time caused by Carlyle's desire to finish his project. As swiftly as he could write, his printer was swifter at setting type. Carlyle could and did revise his proofs extensively, but this still did not give him time to revise the completed work carefully. Nor did Carlyle submit his manuscript to any competent historian for constructive criticism. Since he scarified all but one of the living Cromwellians anyway this may have been mere prudence.[97] The point is Carlyle relied upon himself alone, and must therefore alone bear the burden of his hubris. His studies and reading had been extensive and to his mind were sufficient for him to portray Cromwell accurately. We know better. We know that the accuracy of Carlyle's insight and the precision of his impression of the facts should be applauded and even cheered. Yet at the same time his fidelity to verifiable fact is too often a myopically contemptuous disregard for the same.

It is a shame Carlyle was unable to exercise the diligence and patience in getting matters of fact correct, since his lack of accuracy in matters of detail may well cause readers to question his overall interpretation. Writing history, it should finally be admitted, is a highly subjective enterprise when all is said and done. Yet we can reasonably expect any larger fundamental interpretation of a series of events to be based on objectively compiled and accurately conveyed information. It is accepted that different

elements may be emphasized more or less heavily to suit the interpretation. While Carlyle's partisan history is suspect initially because it is so partisan, ultimately one might largely reject it because it is also so inaccurate. It is, in too many instances, not drawn from the well of facts common to all writers, whatever their interpretation. As history Cromwell can no longer be recommended, except with great caution.

However, if Cromwell has little to recommend itself as history it is quite another matter when considered as literature. In that province the book has much going for it, including its partisanship. An examination of the artistry of Cromwell is the next topic of consideration.

Chapter VII

The Artistry of Cromwell

The value of history rests ultimately upon many factors, although whether a specific author continues to be read is probably more due to an attractive style than anything else. Who, after all, can check Herodotus' sources, or those of his more highly-favored cousin Thucydides? Who today will read Gibbon solely with an eye towards knowledge of the Roman empire? How often is Carlyle consulted merely to find out what happened on a given day during the French Revolution? Today it is the charm or awe these authors' prose evokes, and what their books tell us about them and their views which interest us more, or at least as much, as any purely historical instruction the work can give.

If the comeliness of Carlyle's Cromwell is judged only by factual accuracy, it will quickly become an unbeautiful book. Yet accuracy cannot be ignored; factual infidelity is a sin. The inaccuracy of Cromwell forces us to use the book with great caution, but does not prevent us from considering other aspects of the work that make it still a delight and, to some at least, an inspiration to read. It is in other ways than as a repository of facts that it now holds our attention. The saving graces of Carlyle, and all great historians, are their frame of reference and style.

In Carlyle's Cromwell both are amazing graces. Carlyle's frame of reference, or the set of beliefs by which he interprets and views Cromwell's life, is the most important and influential assessment of the man ever to appear. For this alone the book deserves continued attention. His style, an outgrowth of this frame of reference, which

in turn derives from his larger vision of man, history and God's relationship to, and manifestation in both, is full-bodied, richly textured, and wholly Carlylean despite the handicap of the form of his work. G. B. Tennyson has written most tellingly that Carlyle "is nowhere so grippingly convincing as when he has a biography with which he is in fundamental sympathy but which must be explained to the skeptical reader for its true meaning to be laid bare."[1] This is precisely Carlyle's position in Cromwell. Never again would he encounter a figure whom he so revered, loved, and, to use his terminology, worshipped. At no other time would his audience be so large or initially doubting. And in no other instance would Carlyle succeed so triumphantly. Yet, since everything else derives from it, what exactly did Carlyle believe?

Such a question could easily involve us in interminable wrangling and endless speculation. The debate about Carlyle's "philosophy of history" -- for this is what such a question reduces itself to -- shows no sign of being decisively settled. The old charge of incipient fascism is still a tag occasionally pinned to Carlyle, while his champions are often equally virulent. The question will not finally be resolved here, although a working answer must be given. Perhaps "philosophy of history" is too intimidating a phrase. It implies a certain system, logic, and even progression of ideas, precisely the sort of writing foreign to Carlyle. John Holloway has written that "through Carlyle's prose the nerve of proof -- in the readily understood and familiar sense of straightforward argument -- simply cannot be traced."[2] Candid readers of Carlyle must agree that his approach is more emotional or hortatory than logical, and that a coherent,

logically stated philosophy of history is not to be found in his writings. Still, Carlyle can successfully be shown to have had thoughts on history, standards by which he felt it should be composed, rules by which it was ultimately to be judged. All grew out of his larger thoughts on life itself.

For our purposes this life-view can be reduced to a few basic principles. Holloway isolates four main tenets. The first proclaims the universe is not inert, but the "incarnation of a cosmic spiritual life."[3] Nature to Carlyle is the "Garment of God." This in turn implies the only knowledge of God man could possess came through attempting to understand the Universe He had created. God Himself was unknowable; His universe, which included man, while mysterious, was at times comprehensible in parts. Direct divine revelation was rejected, while what knowledge of God man did possess came in brief and blinding flashes of insight to the most reverent and inspired men. While the universe and everything in it has the potential to manifest this spiritual life, Carlyle sadly observed that much does not. Man does not often reach his potential, while there is an infinite chasm between those who do, and those who do not. These are tenets two and three. Finally, it is the wise man's duty and solemn vow to aid in eliminating from the universe all that is alien to its divineness. It is here that Carlyle's injunction to work enters, here that man is enjoined to love God instead of pleasure, to give up a futile race for happiness in favor of a more rewarding struggle for blessedness.[4]

The infinite chasm between good and evil is important, for here is the shell encasing the embryonic doctrine of hero-worship. Of the few men who manifest the cosmic life of the universe, some do

to a far greater extent than others. These men are heroes. Carlyle writes "The Hero is he who lives in the inward sphere of things, in the True, Divine and Eternal, which exists always, unseen to most, under the Temporary, Trivial."[5] Common to all heroes is their reverence for things divine. Carlyle's earliest examples were literary: Goethe, Jean Paul, Burns, Johnson. Of Goethe he said "We find then in Goethe, an Artist, in the high and ancient meaning of that term; . . . we say that we trace in the creations of this man, belonging in every sense to our own time, some touches of that old, divine spirit." Further, his "religious Wisdom" reveals "glimpses of the Unseen but not unreal World."[6]

As time passed Carlyle turned more to men who acted. Napoleon and Francia were lesser heroes, while Frederick was a flawed yet resourceful man. Napoleon in fact is contrasted unfavorably with Cromwell. In the former was "No silent walking, through long years, with the Awful Unnamable of this Universe." Working against him was the age of religious desuetude in which he lived.[7] Carlyle searched long but found little of the heroic in Francia. He ended his essay on him by speaking of his "farthing rushlight" flame, yet still insisted he would "search what <u>is</u> the <u>truth</u> of this God's Universe."[8] Frederick was a "questionable hero" at best; his virtue was his knowledge of "how entirely inexorable is the nature of facts,"[9] with the main fact being, presumably, the divine universe. Such a meager pantheon might put one off the idea of heroes altogether. Yet Carlyle found a supreme and far worthier example of acted heroism in Cromwell. The other men, in addition to their grasping the divineness of life, also grasped <u>at</u> life, which diminished them. Cromwell, however, with his Puritan piety, seized this idea with

both hands, this glimmering of the eternal in the temporal, this infinite superiority of the vision to the earthbound illusion, and had no time for grasping anything else. At least, according to Carlyle he grasped at nothing else.

Now the role which the hero plays in Carlyle's view of history is the leading one, even if not always acknowledged as such. He deserves to be center-stage, to get the good lines, and to milk the most applause when the curtain is rung down. But mankind does not always recognize its heroes for what they are. Burns was one of Carlyle's favorite examples of a man from whom just praise was deferred, and he frequently pointed out his life was wasted in a petty civil service job. Even Jesus Christ was rejected by his people. However, ultimately the value of these men is known and reverenced. If they were not center-stage in their own day, future ages will give them proper billing.[10] The theatrical comparison is not out of place since Carlyle often treats history dramatically himself.

In another sense it is also appropriate. Carlyle's history carried a message or moral, as much drama does. That lesson is "Listen to your heroes, and go and do likewise!" Holloway is again perceptive when he points out Carlyle believed that "Properly told" history "teaches men their own true nature and how they should live." And again, "What gives point to history is its lessons in morality and -- in the widest sense -- cosmology."[11] Carlyle through his history sought to justify the ways of God in man to man. He sought to reveal the necessity of divinely inspired rule for ordered society, and the possibility of such inspiration in individual life as well. To this end he wrote history; at times he is labored, at times passionate, at times poetic; but always didactic. For this reason

it does Carlyle a disservice to dissociate his at times flamboyant style from the thought animating his history, since the same thought can be traced in his style.

In conveying the divine message which Carlyle insisted rightly-told history taught, he had the fact of past heroisms reinforcing his thought. He also had a style that served the same reinforcing purpose as well. In Cromwell Carlyle attempted to make manifest the eternal vitality of Puritanism, to proclaim it as a form of heroism, and to announce that its greatest exponent, Oliver Cromwell, was a God-intoxicated man. "'For indisputably,'" Carlyle writes, "'this too was a Heroism; and the soul of it remains part of the eternal soul of things! Here, of our own land and lineage, in practical English shape, were Heroes on the Earth once more. Who knew in every fibre, . . . That an Almighty Justice does verily rule this world; that it is good to fight on God's side, and bad to fight on the Devil's side.'"[12] Aside from explicit statements of heroism in passages like this one, Carlyle reveals this implicitly in his manner of writing.

Although Carlyle's prose in Cromwell is discontinuous because of the book's form, his style of writing complements the letters he presents, and even intensifies their message. At times when Cromwell himself becomes turgid or tortured the reader may gratefully skim ahead to return to Carlyle's prose. But Carlyle is strongly sympathetic to Cromwell's orthodox Christianity. This sympathy is apparent in the ideas both men express repeatedly -- Carlyle's divine universe in which man is in awe of God, and Cromwell's Puritan theology in which man humbles himself before God -- with both ideas continually reinforcing and amplifying each other. Although this reinforcement

comes throughout Cromwell it is perhaps clearest in the annotated speeches where Cromwell's utterances are often followed by Carlyle's affirmative reaction. In one example Cromwell speaks of men admitted to the ministry:

> I am sure the admission granted to such places since has been under this character as the rule: That they must not admit a man unless they were able to discern something of the Grace of God in him. /Really, it is the grand primary essential, your Highness./[13]

At another point Cromwell speaks of God's glory as a "Free Possession of the Gospel" vouchsafed to man. Carlyle's effusive response is "Beautiful, thou noble soul!"[14] And again:

> We are as full of calamities, and of divisions among us in respect of the spirits of men, "as we could well be," -- though, through a wonderful, admirable, and never to be sufficiently admired Providence of God, "still" in peace! And the fighting we have had, and the success we have had -- Yea, we that are here, we are an astonishment to the world! And take us in that temper we are in . . . . it is the greatest miracle that ever befell the sons of men, "that we are got again to peace" -- /'Beautiful great soul,' exclaims a modern Commentator here, 'Beautiful great soul; to whom the Temporal is all irradiated with the Eternal, and God is everywhere divinely visible in the affairs of men, and man himself has as it were become divine. . . . There have been Divine Souls in England; England . . . has been illuminated, though it were but once, by the Heavenly Ones; -- and once, in a sense, is always!'/ -- that we are got again to peace. And whoever shall seek to break it, God almighty root that man out of this nation![15]

In passages like these both men appear to be saying the same thing. Both speak a Christian dialect replete with Biblical allusions and are in a dialogue in which they continually agree with one another.

Before considering further the similarities between the two men's similar mode of expressing their thoughts, it is wise to point out their sympathy is not identity. Carlyle was no orthodox Christian.

"Puritanism was not the Complete Theory of this immense Universe," he once exclaimed, and added that he felt "the Destinies meant something grander with England than even Oliver Protector did!"[16] In other words, a Christian state was not necessarily to Carlyle the ideal community it would have been to Cromwell. Christianity was a revelation of sorts, one of the ways of approaching God that happened to be generally accepted and understood at this moment in time. When sincerely believed, it was a good faith. This in itself did not preclude a grander manifestation of God in some future time or place. At the same time the value of Christianity did not debase the currency of other religions.[17] Obviously such a position would have been unthinkable to the narrower Cromwell.

Still, there is a semblance of unity in what the two men say which stems from several factors. First, both agree on a great deal, and Carlyle seemingly "understands" Cromwell. His faith had once been Carlyle's, while it always remained the faith of his family. His departure from orthodox Christianity was not an utterly hostile rejection, but the painful putting away of a childish thing by a maturing individual. In itself it was no longer credible. Yet Carlyle gladly retained that tincture of truth which he felt his early faith contained. This tincture was the immanence of God and his judgments. When Cromwell spoke of God in these terms Carlyle could appreciate the sincere faith that others took for cant.

A second reason for this seeming unity is the striking similarity between Carlyle and Cromwell's language. On the mechanical level both use a rather tortured sentence structure and, since Carlyle edited punctuation rather heavily throughout the letters and speeches it is no surprise that he frequently added the dashes and exclamations

to Cromwell's words he utilizes himself. The Germanic capitalization Carlyle employed is also an added feature. Yet these mechanical similarities would go for nothing were it not for the Biblical echoes that reverberate through the prose of both men. It is convincingly claimed that Carlyle wrote "in a language which is influenced through and through by that of the Authorized Version."[18] The reader of Carlyle's day, according to Holloway, would naturally associate this with supreme authority, an authority to which he would likely be sympathetic. In Cromwell this device is doubly effective since no significant utterance of Cromwell's is without its invocation of the Deity. Cromwell frequently quotes the Bible, discourses on God's goodness and mercy, or seeks God's guidance when troubled. Cromwell preaches, Cromwell prays; at the same time Carlyle uses a similar language to mirror parallel beliefs.

In the above quotation there are expressions like "Providence of God," "Yea, we that are here," "Sons of men," "Heavenly Ones," "God is everywhere," and "Beautiful great soul." The first three are Cromwell's phrases, the rest Carlyle's. It is not always possible to distinguish which man is speaking when language of this type is used. Both are overtly Biblical. And aside from the similarity of tone, obvious allusion to the Bible is frequent in Carlyle's writing:

> The world may first obtain some dim glimpse of the actual Cromwell, and see him darkly face to face.
>
> For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face.
>
> A man of many troubles, now and afterwards.
>
> He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.

> the palpitation, tremulous expectation; wooden Gog and Magog themselves almost sweating cold with terror.
>
> Gog and Magog, to gather them together in battle.
>
> By their Pantheons ye shall know them.
> Ye shall know them by their fruits.
>
> and thirsted as the hart in dry places wherein no waters be?
> As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.[19]

While there were undoubtedly other influences than the Bible on the development of Carlyle's style, it indelibly stamps not only his mode of expressing himself, but also the ideas expressed. So it was with Cromwell himself. The contiguity of the two men's utterances reinforces this Biblical tone, while in itself the use of Biblical language and allusion might favorably incline the reader towards acceptance of the views expressed.

It is, however, in one sense curious that Carlyle did use this sort of language, or that his style developed into such an overtly Biblical one. He did not accept Christianity as Cromwell did, or as any Christian would. Is there not, then, in his use of a Biblical style, at least a hint of disingenuousness? In an age of growing and gnawing doubt that proved fatal even to Carlyle's once orthodox faith, was it not at least curious that he should so extravagantly employ a language that represented a type of revelation which he himself no longer found credible?

The short answer must be, yes, it is curious, but not necessarily disingenuous. Carlyle maintained that the old forms needed to be reworked, yet he used the language of them himself, not only in Cromwell, but in most of his writings. There are several probable

reasons, the most obvious being that it was his natural mode of expression. It was a sort of language he knew from his earliest days, had learned from his father, mother, and friends like Edward Irving, all of whom certainly believed what they said. And although no longer credible to many such language would probably be more understood by Carlyle's readers than any he could employ. What other terms could he use that would be, if not accepted, still so familiar to his readers? What other language could be so hortatory, so earnest or so inspiring,or convey Carlyle's message with the same force? Obviously for Carlyle his language had a certain utility. Where he might be accused of not being totally honest is by implying through this language that he accepted the faith it represented. Since he makes it clear he does not, readers who think otherwise are more guilty of misreading than Carlyle is of insincerity.

Certainly Carlyle saw value in his old faith. As he wrote to Sterling, who accepted the personal God of Christianity: "I can rejoice that you have a creed of that kind, which gives you happy thoughts, nerves you for good actions, brings you into readier communion with many good men; my true wish is that such creed may long hold compactly together in you."[20] Here we see again that Carlyle's rejection of Christianity was not total, though as far as it went it was irrevocable. This rejection did not also force him to reject the language of the Bible.

Another reason for use of this language is its link with the seventeenth century. Understanding the terms that had then been on everyone's lips and in most people's hearts was essential for understanding the men and their beliefs. This <u>was</u> honest language, these <u>were</u> credible beliefs. Today's reader must somehow be made to accept

that fact. Carlyle was conscious of all this, and wrote of it in his drafts.

> Much is said of Language, and then much also of Books, written language. Both are great, very wondrous in this life of ours: yet both withal are little, most ineffectual, inadequate. The speech of any given generation soon /?/ does it becomes obsolete, unreadable, heart-oppressive, a thing equivalent to no-speech, to jargon, which one longs to be seen changed into good silence![21]

And again:

> The serious phraseology of all men in those days, a thing worth noting. Even George Monk takes care not to close his despatches without something of what "the Lord has done for us." Liable to abuse, this dialect: but which dialect is <u>not</u> so? Our current dialect is a snigger, a universal hollow mockery, or affectation at most.[22]

Since Carlyle was himself serious in his attempt to show men the truth of this past age, he had little choice but to employ the same "serious phraseology." For whatever combination of reasons, the conclusion seems inescapable that Carlyle's choice of a Biblical language in <u>Cromwell</u>, and many of his other writings, was natural for him and essential to his message. Certainly in <u>Cromwell</u> it was never more effective.

Another aspect of Carlyle's Biblical language is his tendency to prophesy. Carlyle often "predicts" the future course of events, of which he has full knowledge. There is the example of his treatment of the Duke of Hamilton, eventually executed by the Commonwealth for treason. Long before this Carlyle predicts "he has begun a course of new diplomacies, which will end still more tragically for him."[23] Over four years before the dissolution of the Rump

Carlyle sees the handwriting on the wall: "By and by, if this course hold, it will appear that 'you are no Parliament.'"[24] Finally, Carlyle predicts the death of Cromwell. "Courage, my brave Oliver! Thou hast but some three years more of it, and then the coils and puddles of this earth . . . are all behind thee."[25]

Certainly we may doubt Carlyle ever felt himself inspired with the gift of divine prophesy, although he may have implied he at times was. By using this prophetic device, Carlyle was actually taking advantage of the nature of historical narrative. All histories are written with hindsight. Authors may make use of this in different ways, with some even attempting to avoid this condition by thinking themselves back into a moment before a critical event had occurred, when it might have happened other than it did. When Carlyle predicts the future of his characters he rejects this approach, and embraces the inevitable nature of the form of history. The future is known. Where Carlyle differs from his colleagues is in the open manner in which he exploits this. Still, one naturally associates prophecy with the Bible. The Old Testament prophets were inspired men of God. Their utterances were to be heeded as God's own. Carlyle, not unconscious of the role the prophet played in the Bible, used a similar device and language. No doubt by doing so he hoped to attract some of the original prophets' authority.

In hand with this tendency to prophesy is Carlyle's role as interpreter. In itself one would not normally associate this idea with the Bible, and then relate it to Carlyle's writing. But one must remember Carlyle's belief in man's ability to manifest the spiritual life of the universe. The lives of those men needed interpreting so the rest of mankind could understand precisely why

they were great. All through Cromwell Carlyle interprets Cromwell's actions anew. He does this in a way which recalls Christ's interpretation of the parables and Old Testament prophets. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus said:

> Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment . . . whosoever shall say Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.[26]

Christ gives the old teaching a greater depth by reinterpreting it. This is a technique Carlyle himself uses frequently. He seeks the inner meaning, the deeper understanding in detailing the life of Cromwell. In the first place his life had lain hidden for two centuries, buried beneath the wreck of human lies and stupidity. Men had interpreted Cromwell's life, but had done so wrongly or at best imperfectly.

In interpreting Cromwell's second letter Carlyle begins by offering the "traditional" view, which was that it proved "Oliver was once a very dissolute man." Carlyle then asserts this was because most men never had the "moral life" of Cromwell. They were not inspired enough to interpret his words correctly:

> O modern reader, dark as this Letter may seem, I will advise thee to make an attempt towards understanding it. There is in it a 'tradition of humanity' worth all the rest. Indisputable certificate that man once had a soul; that man once walked with God, -- his little Life a sacred island girdled with Eternities and Godhoods. . . . Annihilation of self; Selbsttoedtung, as Novalis calls it; casting yourself at the footstool of God's throne, 'To live or to die forever; as Thou wilt, not as I will.' Brother, hadst thou never, in any form, such moments in thy history?[27]

All this and more is Carlyle's interpretation of the letter. There is a humanity about the letters, and also a divinity. Cromwell's faith, evident in this letter, made him heroic, noble, yet supremely humble, because he sought to execute God's will and not his own. This search for the deeper meaning is a method that recurs throughout the book as Carlyle seeks to explain and justify Cromwell's spiritual life as the necessary precursor of his day-to-day life. This is not solely a Biblical device, but coupled with Carlyle's language, his Biblical allusion, and the overt references to God and the Bible by Cromwell, the result is that we are persuaded to take his interpretations as authoritative, if not prophetic utterances, and not merely as the reexaminations of old evidence which they are.

Among other elements in Carlyle's style the most important is imagery. While his use of Biblical terms is strikingly effective in creating an atmosphere of authority, his imagery goes far to define this sphere of authority. It guides the reader in determining to whom authority is granted and why. Interesting in this respect is the imagery associated with Cromwell, and the lengths to which Carlyle is prepared to go to establish his hero's authority.

Before discussing the specific treatment of Cromwell it is well to note generally the astounding richness of allusion in a book which Carlyle called a dry-bones of a compilation. All the major patterns of imagery isolated largely in other works by other critics are to be found in Cromwell. This includes animal imagery, plays on light and darkness, and its adjuncts of flame and fire. Water imagery is also common. In addition to these, the contrast of death to life and sleep to wakefulness are probably the most common images in Cromwell. There are also the ways in which the various patterns

relate to the Book's hero.

The imagery of light and dark, central in all Carlyle's writing according to Holloway, and second only to clothing in Sartor Resartus according to Tennyson, is quite common in Cromwell.[28] Its frequency of appearance is remarkable, as are the number and extent of its adjuncts. In Cromwell the most common use of darkness is in reference to the past history, histories, and historians of Cromwell. Such books are "full of every conceivable confusion; -- yielding light to very few; yielding darkness, in several sorts, to very many. Dull Pedantry, concerted idle Dilettantism, -- prurient stupidity in what shape soever, -- is darkness and not light!"[29] Historian Mark Noble works in an "element of perennial dimness."[30] At another point the histories are referred to collectively as "this Rushworthian inarticulate rubbish-continent, in its ghastly dim twilight, with its haggard wrecks and pale shadows."[31] The darkness of the period, the lies told, written and thought about it at times even threaten to overwhelm the truth, which naturally appears as light. Carlyle quotes Schiller to the effect that even gods fight in vain against stupidity, then continues "There is in it an opulence of murky stagnancy, an inexhaustibility . . . which will say calmly, 'Yes, try all your lightnings here; see whether my dark belly cannot hold them!'"[32] In addition to this there is probably no word more frequently used in reference to this pattern than dimness. It applies to books, pamphlets, events and people and implies a most imperfect perception of the truth. It is so pervasive in Cromwell that it diminishes the already unlikely possibility of a true interpretation of the period.

The near triumph of darkness is also evident at times in the

way light is treated. The presentation of the letters, Carlyle claims, may make the soul of Puritanism visible "even in faint twilight." Then, "what masses of brutish darkness will gradually vanish. . . . Masses of foul darkness, sordid confusions not a few . . . which now bury this matter very deep, may vanish."[33] The only light in the passage is a fragile "faint twilight," while against this is posed "brutish darkness," "foul darkness," and "sordid confusions." No doubt the reader remembers that darkness follows hard on twilight. This sort of passage is typical. Any light that does appear is ephemeral, wavering and faint -- lightning on the horizon rather than brilliant sunlight. Although somewhat depressing this is in keeping with Carlyle's view of the irrecoverability of the past, except in brief, hurried glimpses. Thus a young soldier is a "little spark" in a blue bonnet.[34] A letter is "One spark illuminating (very faintly) that huge dark world."[35] The letters in aggregate receive the following treatment:

> For the rest, if each Letter look dim, and have little light, after all study; -- yet let the Historical reader reflect, such light as it has cannot be disputed at all. These words . . . Oliver Cromwell did see fittest to be written down. The Letter hangs there in the dark abysses of the Past: if like a star almost extinct, yet like a real star; fixed; about which there is no cavilling possible. That autograph Letter, it was once all luminous as a burning beacon, every word of it a live coal, in its time; it was once a piece of the general fire and light of Human Life, that Letter! . . . Heaped embers which in the daylight looked black, may still look <u>red</u> in the utter darkness. . . . By degrees the combined small twilights may produce a kind of general feeble twilight, rendering the Past credible, the Ghosts of the Past in some glimpses of them visible![36]

Thus of the true history of the period modern man can catch only glimpses in twilight. Strongly associated with light imagery is that of fire, as the above quotation in part attests. At times

the purity of the flame indicates the worth of the thing burning; at other times the flame is symbolic of violent uncontrolled rebellion, incipient or in progress. An "Anabaptist-Leveller" minister of whose opinions Carlyle disapproves preached a sermon which contained "Elements of soot and fire really copious; fuliginous-flamy in a very high degree! . . . A very foul chimney indeed, here got on fire."[37] A royalist uprising "which should have blazed all over England" was "damped out" and "amounted to smoke merely."[38] On the other hand, the Puritan ministers sought a godly England, presided over by priests "whose hearts the Most High had touched and hallowed with his fire."[39] Here the flame is a pure one, and powerfully evokes the Biblical Pentecost where the visible sign of God's presence and inspiration was a tongue of fire appearing over the heads of his disciples.[40]

Fire also symbolizes a certain confusion or turmoil. Cromwell's letters were written "in the very flame and conflagration of a revolutionary struggle."[41] There is the need to "extinguish this traitorous fanatic flame."[42] In other instances England is "hot," "may be rather said to <u>smoke</u>, everywhere ready for burning, and incidentally catch fire here and there."[43] Prince Rupert blazes "like a streak of sudden <u>fire</u>, for he . . . even <u>burns</u>."[44] The looming second civil war "hangs over England like a flaming comet, England itself being all very combustible too."[45]

Apart from the light and dark imagery there is equally important play between life and death. Indeed, a strong case could be made for calling this imagery, along with its associated ideas the most powerful in <u>Cromwell</u>. Allied with life and death is Carlyle's idea that the universe is full of hidden life. Holloway claims "there is

much in Carlyle's language to suggest this life in the universe." A "wild, passionate energy runs through" his style, "disorderly and even chaotic, but leaving an indelible impression of life, force, vitality." There is heavy punctuation, frequent use of the query and exclamation point. The "reader is hurried, as if by an all-pervading and irresistible violence" through Carlyle's prose.[46] Included among the life-giving properties of Carlyle's style are his tendency to assume voices other than his own in his prose, as well as his ability to find something eternal in the most humble objects.

There are several kinds of imagery used that help express the life of the universe. The first is animal imagery. Carlyle often compares people to beasts. Whitelocke becomes a hippopotamus.[47] Cromwell is given the "silent wariness and promptitude" of a fox, while the lethargic Earl of Essex is "elephantine."[48] A more graphic but equally apt image of King Charles associates him with a horse. "Unfortunate King, we see him chafing, stamping, -- a very fiery steed, but bridled, check-bitted, by innumerable straps and considerations."[49] Further examples are not restricted to individuals. The Cavalier and Puritan armies constitute a boa coiled round a lion.[50] The bishops of Scotland are Tulchan cows -- fakes used to deceive.[51] Members of Parliament opposed to Buckingham were "hounds having got all upon the scent."[52] At times even abstract ideas are described through reference to animals. The modern "Genius of England" for example, was no longer "world-defiant, like an Eagle" but resembled "a greedy Ostrich intent on provender . . . with its <u>other</u> extremity forward."[53]

A second pattern indicating the life -- or lack of it -- of

the Universe is water imagery. It is frequently used negatively. There are "whirlpools of old paper-clippings" and "fountains of constitutional logic."[54] Early histories of Cromwell were issued "as if from the lake of Eternal Sleep."[55] In other words, they were unintelligible. Similarly, the true history could only be recovered from the "Lethe-swamps and Tartarean Phlegethons."[56] Cromwell shut out "the raging sea" through his "labour and valour and death-peril."[57] It is difficult to find a wholly positive application of the water imagery. Despair predominates over hope in most examples of this and other patterns. With water a more positive application comes in references to a comforting Bible verse which "drew waters out of the well of Salvation."[58]

The situation is much the same when growth and decay are considered. There is good and bad growth. Viewed negatively troubles "brew" or a Royalist uprising was "a-brewing."[59] Republican elements in Parliament were a mass of fermenting leaven.[60] Worthless history books are a "mouldering dumb wilderness of things once alive."[61] Far better for us all if they were still alive. The unheroic books have their counterpart in unheroic ages which serve only as "dust" and "inorganic manure,"[62] both rather worthless forms of fertilizer. As would be expected, positive examples of growth come in relation to Cromwell and the Puritan achievement. The West-Indian initiative "did take root" and "bears spices and poisons, and other produce, to this day."[63] Cromwell's new House of Lords, made up of pious men, well-disposed to Puritanism was a "tree new-planted" -- soon uprooted as it chanced.[64] One of the most graphic of the growth images, also a comment on order, relates to natural growing trees, and those forced to assume a certain pattern or shape of growth.

"The forest-trees are not in 'order' because they are all clipt into the same shape of Dutch-dragons, and forced to die or grow in that way; but because in each of them there is the same genuine unity of life, from the inmost pith to the outmost leaf, and they do grow according to that!" To his credit Cromwell was a forest tree and not a Dutch-dragon.[65]

Yet in the imagery of life and death, the most frequently occurring references are explicit in their mention of life, death, sleep or wakefulness. As in the case of light and dark, scarcely a page of Carlyle's prose passes without some association with this image. In the first chapter alone the wealth of references is astonishing. Here, of course, Carlyle is at the podium, commenting, exhorting, excoriating; he has, as it were, hit his stride. In the midst of the letters he is somewhat more subdued, but in "Anti-Dryasdust" his imagery rushes like a spring torrent. The most prominent are references to death and sleep. The books of the Puritan period are an "inarticulate slumberous mumblement, issuing as if from the lake of Eternal Sleep." Cromwell is overwhelmed by "waste lumber mountains . . . and dead ashes of some six unbelieving generations."[66] False history is death. This idea is later expanded somewhat and associated with other images already mentioned. What is this "Rushworthian inarticulate rubbish-continent, in its ghastly dim twilight, with its haggard wrecks and pale shadows; what is it, but the common Kingdom of Death? This <u>is</u> what we call Death, this mouldering dumb wilderness of things once alive. Behold here the final evanescence of Formed human things . . . changing into sheer formlessness."[67] The barrier to a proper understanding is that the "Christian Doctrines which then dwelt alive in every heart, have now

in a manner died out of all hearts."[68] The best history is the truest memory of memorable things. The body of history, the "dates and statistics" "might be dead enough; but the soul of it" can still be "alive to all hearts" and cannot die. Why, wonders Carlyle, do the Greeks have a living Iliad "where we have such a deadly indescribable Cromwelliad?"[69] Carlyle closes this account with a Norse "Mythus" about the death of the sun-god Balder. His brother Hermoder descended to "Hela's Death-realm" in order to try to resurrect him. Hermoder "saw Balder, the very Balder, with his eyes: -- but could not bring him back." Carlyle here associates the sun-god Balder with true, "living" history, which because Balder is dead, now becomes irrecoverable. "Balder could never return! -- -- Is not this an emblem?"[70]

Indeed, sleep and death are prime Carlylean emblems for the irrecoverability of the past and our present insensitivity to it. Thus, events in Cromwell are frequently referred to in terms of sleep or death images. A "somnolent" parliamentary bill "is resuscitated" and "comes out, rubbing its eyes . . . and in fact sleeps no more."[71] The history of the Little Parliament "lay all buried very deep."[72] There is a "fat somnolency" in Whitelocke -- always, it seems, a favorite target for Carlyle's darts.[73] The second Civil War dies of a broken back, while the Irish war "every-where staggers falling, or already lies fallen, writhing in paralytic convulsions, making haste to die."[74]

As was true of other images, the negative overwhelms. Wholesome references to life are infrequent and muted. Some of Cromwell's letters are "resuscitated after long interment: not in a very luminous condition!"[75] The history of the campaign to take Jamaica

is "drowned deep in the Slumber-Lakes of Thurloe and Company . . . A history indeed, which, as you painfully fish it up and by degrees reawaken it to life, is in itself sufficiently dismal."[76] It is difficult to avoid a personal feeling of despair when confronted with such negative imagery. Indeed, Carlyle himself seems almost desperate. He offered the letters of Cromwell to the reader "with my best wishes, but not with any very high immediate hope,"[77] and doubts his book will lead to more positive, enlightened action by his readers. This is all too evident in the imagery, literally from the first to the final page. For at the beginning of Cromwell Carlyle speaks of "the dreary provinces of the dead and buried" in which he has worked.[78] On the last page he adjures the reader to take the proper moral from the life of Cromwell, and thereby avoid a terrible awakening. "Awake before it come to that; gods and men bid us awake! The Voices of our Fathers, with thousandfold stern monition to one and all, bid us awake."[79] This manner of ending the book is almost without hope, since Carlyle's very tone implies his doubt of a positive response. Carlyle repeats his admonition three times, always more emphatically. It is as if he tries one last time to reawaken the reader who has been asleep or somehow inattentive to the message of the book. Obviously it has been lost on him: the effort made by the author/editor to awaken the reader has been a fruitless one, made "without any very high immediate hope" or any likely positive result.

In this imagery of near despair there is one figure fighting manfully against darkness, death and ignorance. That is Cromwell. Most of the patterns in the book are eventually used in reference to this central figure, and in this instance the impression is overwhelmingly

positive. Yet it comes only in reference to one man and Carlyle cannot escape the fact that Cromwell's government crumbled shortly after his death. The implementation of his vision of a juster, more God-fearing society was interrupted by the Restoration. So, while the imagery which characterizes Cromwell may be positive his legacy is difficult to view as favorably. The facts might lead one to detect a certain hollowness in Carlyle's championing of his hero.

Cromwell is described in many ways. He is frequently in motion and is normally described with verbs of action: "Oliver . . . is present in the Fen-country, and all over the Eastern Association, with his troop or troops; looking after disaffected persons; ready to disperse royalist assemblages, to seize royalist plate, to keep down disturbance, and care in every way that the Parliament Cause suffer no damage."[80] At another point he is referred to as a "melodious Worker" -- certainly the highest compliment the mature Carlyle could pay.[81] This worker also wrestled "against boundless Anarchies."[82] At another point heroes generally are described as "earnest wrestling, death-defying, prodigal of their blood."[83] Clearly, Cromwell was a supreme man of action. Since he was always doing something, Cromwell becomes the prime image of the vigorous life of the universe.

Cromwell's life is also related to the animal kingdom. Ending a sentence in a speech he has the look "partly as of an injured dove, partly as of a couchant lion."[84] In an interpolation to another speech Carlyle notes the "aspect of that face, with its lion-mouth and mournful eyes."[85] In another instance Cromwell is "able to bit and bridle" the English nation.[86] Finally, his God-appointed task in life is likened to him riding "a fleet lightning-steed: manfully thou shalt clutch it by the mane, and vault into thy seat on it,

and ride and guide there, thou!"[87] Cromwell is the king of beasts, and the tamer or domesticator of beasts; he rules and brings order and productivity.

He is also seen in terms of light. He and his troops storm a fortress "like a fire flood."[88] Cromwell possessed a temper which at times became a "fiery savagery."[89] We see Cromwell "glowing with direct insight," and note also that "A very dangerous radiance blazes through these eyes of my Lord General's"[90] In a final example the two "world-great" men in English history are compared to each other. "'As lightning is to light, so is a Cromwell to a Shakspeare. The light is beautifuler. Ah yes; but until, by lightning and other fierce labour, your foul Chaos has become a World, you cannot have any light, or the smallest chance for any.'"[91]

Cromwell brought some measure of light by bringing order. Other references come close to ascribing superhuman qualities to him. Clearly his piety was an innervating and inspiring force, for Cromwell is "filled by the Idea of the Highest." "Bathed in the Eternal Splendours, -- it is so he walks our dim earth: this man is one of few. He is projected with a terrible force out of the Eternities, and . . . there is nothing that can withstand him."[92] At another point Cromwell is "the veritable Heaven's Messenger clad in thunder."[93] Cromwell everywhere executes God's judgment. Indeed, at times one might almost mistake him for a god. He is called the true King or "Governor" of Scotland, even though the Scots rejected him: "But they knew him not."[94] Here one is reminded of the prophecy of the Jews' rejection of Christ as their King and Savior, "Yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted," or also of Jacob, who after his dream at Bethel said "Surely the Lord is in

this place; and I knew it not."[95] In a reference to pagan mythology, he declares Cromwell "descended" on Ireland "like the hammer of Thor."[96] Another finds a speech of his fit for "Valhalla, and the Sanhedrim of the Gods", a curious mixture of references.[97] Returning to the Christian world Carlyle refers to Cromwell's work in Ireland as "the only Gospel . . . I can yet discover to have ever been fairly afoot there."[98] Returning to the Christian world Carlyle refers to Cromwell's work in Ireland as "the only Gospel . . . I can yet discover to have ever been fairly afoot there."[98] This is a startling comment once a possible implication is understood. For it was Christ who proclaimed the Gospel and literally lived it by fulfilling the words of the Old Testament prophets through his suffering, death and resurrection, as recorded in the four Gospels. Apart from the rather savage paradox with Cromwell whose "Gospel" was "proclaimed" not by innocent example as Christ's was, but by the infliction of a great deal of suffering and death, here there is a direct equation of Christ with Cromwell.[98a]

Beyond this Carlyle cannot go. This far he probably did not intend. In fact, he does retreat somewhat. This does not come in his own descriptions of Cromwell so much as in the frequent quotations from contemporary sources that opened windows into Cromwell's day-to-day life. There we see Cromwell with specks of blood on his collar, Cromwell bargaining in a firm materialistic manner over the terms of a marriage treaty, Oliver on his death-bed, delirious and distracted.[99] Cromwell is, in a manner of speaking, brought back down to earth by the contemporaries Carlyle saw fit to quote. If he is not given feet of clay by Carlyle, he nonetheless can occasionally be found in recognisable garb thanks to his contemporaries.

Still, from Carlyle's point of view Cromwell was the only truly heroic figure in the period. As the imagery has shown, Carlyle needed a supremely positive figure to help offset the prevalent darkness, despair and death so common in Cromwell. Perhaps Carlyle consciously heightened the negative imagery in order to make Cromwell appear in greater glory. Certainly he is successful in his imagery, but one might seriously question how much the facts and the imagery have in common.

While the imagery and figurative language of Cromwell is rich, it is typical of Carlyle's work. In Sartor or the French Revolution the composition is denser, the images more thickly applied, and the general effect more powerful, perhaps because the canvas was entirely Carlyle's. Half Cromwell is the subject's work; nonetheless, Carlyle worked skillfully with the letters and speeches. His essential harmony with their spirit and profound sympathy with the man Cromwell, coupled with a remarkable similarity of idiom all work together to make the book more a unified whole than one might expect. It is the work of two men speaking with a similar voice.

It has perhaps been too insistently emphasized that Carlyle had a didactic purpose in mind when he wrote history. Yet it is critical for understanding his work and the style he used in it. Far from being a pleasant or grotesque affectation, it was a means of realizing his purpose. He sought to bring people closer to the meaning of history by bringing them closer to the reality of the past. This is most evident in the immediacy of his narrative, one of the most remarked aspects of Carlyle's historical writing. His achievement here comes in bringing the reader to the event and allowing him to witness it, at times forcing him to witness it. It would, however,

be a mistake to equate this achievement with his ultimate goal, which was the reader's positive response and reaction to the narrative itself. Indeed, one might say Carlyle sought a religious conversion from his readers since he was the inspired writer revealing the truth about the past. Setting aside for the moment the question of results, which is impossible to determine anyway, let us examine the type of passage for which Carlyle is justly famous. The one describing the battle of Dunbar is typical:

> And now is the hour when the attack should be, and no Lambert is yet here, he is ordering the line far to the right yet; and Oliver occasionally, in Hodgson's hearing, is impatient for him. The Scots too, on this wing, are awake; thinking to surprise us; there is their trumpet sounding, we heard it once; and Lambert, who was to lead the attack, is not here. The Lord General is impatient; -- behold Lambert at last! The trumpets peal, shattering with fierce clangour Night's silence; the cannons awaken along all the Line: 'The Lord of Hosts! The Lord of Hosts!' On, my brave ones, on! --
>
> The dispute 'on this right wing was hot and stiff, for three quarters of an hour.' Plenty of fire, from fieldpieces, snaphances, matchlocks, entertains the Scotch main-battle across the Brock; -- poor stiffened men, roused from the cornshocks with their matches all out! But here on the right, their horse, 'with lancers in the front rank,' charge desperately; drive us back across the hollow of the Rivulet; -- back a little; but the Lord gives us courage, and we storm home again, horse and foot, upon them, with a shock like tornado tempests; break them, beat them, drive them all adrift. . . . Poor men, it was a terrible awakening for them: fieldpieces and charge of foot across the Brocksburn; and now here is their own horse in mad panic trampling them to death. Above Three-thousand killed upon the place: 'I never saw such a charge of foot and horse,' says one; nor did I. Oliver was still near to Yorkshire Hodgson when the shock succeeded; Hodgson heard him say, 'They run! I profess they run!' And over St. Abb's Head and the German Ocean, just then, bursts the first gleam of the level Sun upon us, 'and I heard Nol say, in the words of the Psalmist, "Let God arise, let His enemies be scattered."'[100]

In analyzing this passage for what makes it so effective two reasons emerge. The first is its variation of tense, while the

second is what could be called "presence." This concerns where Carlyle places himself in relation to the action described. He hears the trumpet sounding, senses Oliver's impatience, cheers on the Parliamentary forces. Suddenly he becomes a soldier himself, initially repulsed by the desperately charging Scots. "But the Lord gives us courage, and we storm home again." Just as suddenly Carlyle assumes a greater distance and briefly retreats to a simple and sympathetic past tense: "It was a terrible awakening for" the Scots; but soon Carlyle rushes into the fray again: "now here is their own horse in mad panic." Later, in a portion of the passage not quoted Carlyle even becomes a penitent Scottish soldier who muses "We have stood by the letter of the Covenant . . . they again, they stand by the substance of it, and have trampled us and the letter of it into this ruinous state." Again Carlyle draws back and admonishes his "poor friends" to "be wise, be taught," Carlyle is even at home in the future tense when he says of the Covenant that the "spirit and substance of it, please God, will never die in this or in any world."[101]

So here is Carlyle, seemingly everywhere at once: involved in the battle, on both sides of it, with Oliver, yet also guiding the reader to the meaning of the entire affair. His achievement comes from manipulation of tense and voice. By working largely in the present tense the battle takes place as we read the account. And yet we do not lack the advantage, which only hindsight can give, of being present at the most important place at any given moment. Through Carlyle there also is the ability to pull back, to survey more dispassionately, which often involves a change from the present to the past or future tense, and a move from the heat of battle to

a more lofty eminence. It has been written that Carlyle's use of the present tense transports us "perpetually" into "the presence of Carlyle himself." "It forces us . . . to look down on the revolution from the skyey post of observation where He sits." We see the rebellion through his eyes "with comprehension of the how and why, with pity and disdain."[102] Although the present tense has much to do with this effect certainly it is the startling juxtaposition of all tenses that produces the unfailing prophetic tone and impact of Carlyle's best prose.

This effect can perhaps best be illustrated through comparison. A more traditionally structured narrative of this same battle is flat and unexciting:

> The attack was set for a little before sunrise, but when the moment came Lambert was still riding among his men giving orders about the guns on the right and making the last preparations, while Cromwell's impatience increased as daylight began to appear. Finally, a little after four o'clock on the morning of September 3, the signal was given and three horse regiments crossed the stream below Broxmouth House, drove in the Scots' outposts, and fell upon the Scots' right wing, while the artillery opened fire and two foot regiments moved up in support to secure the passage for the rest of the army. The trumpets sounded; the English shouted their battle-cry, "The Lord of Hosts," and the Scots replied with "The Covenant! The Covenant!" as they rallied to meet Lambert's charge against their right wing. They resisted stubbornly, and though Cromwell ordered Lambert to incline a little more to the left to outflank them, if possible, they began to drive the English back into the stream in considerable disorder.[103]

The difference in the two treatments is that Carlyle imagines himself present, even omnipresent, while other writers merely report.

Since there is no Time-hat allowing a journey back to witness the event to be chronicled,[104] the next best approach was to imagine ourselves there through a sympathetic understanding of the age and

its people, and the use of the best available sources. It is not difficult to see that in Carlyle's shifting tenses and "presence" at the scene of the action he has come closest to annihilating time and space as barriers to man's understanding of the past. Elliot Gilbert agrees when he asserts Carlyle "rejected time itself as the key to an understanding of man and his experience." As a result of this Carlyle challenged the notion common to strictly chronological history "that the reality of historical figures is an allusion which weakens in direct proportion to the remoteness of those figures from us in time." In other words, the farther from an event we are in time, the more impossible it becomes to understand. For this idea Carlyle substitutes the "much more powerful intuition that at the moment we encounter men and women well rendered in the pages of books or historical documents they become fully and in reality our contemporaries, coeval with us in an eternal present, not merely like us, but co-existent with us.[105] By vividly describing the past it becomes the present, and as such is a more familiar and comfortable atmosphere, one from which the reader may more easily draw instruction.

Why Carlyle chose such an approach is worth considering, for in doing so the relation of style to message is again shown. Carlyle's juxtaposing of all tenses with emphasis on the present tense is common practice in Cromwell, and much of his historical writing. It is a startling way to write history, but a logical application of his thought. One fact on which he was most insistent was that the past had happened and was made up of real people living in a web of life. He praised Scott for making this point in his novels.[106] He excoriated previous studies of the Commonwealth for doing the

opposite: "Anti-Dryasdust" is the best example. In the working papers there is this telling and slightly sneering remark:

> He is a conservative (one of the truest) who brings back the Past vitally visible into the Present living Time. The Past too was all alive, tho' dull History (the dull Pedantry of History) gives us only the ashes of it, the calcined bones of it. Calcined bones cannot profit us; better almost that they too were buried and forgotten. Shew me however the life of the Past, you shew me the worth of the Past; how I, had I lived then, would have been a zealous citizen of it, and worked and striven and fought for it in those days, -- how for the spirit and real meaning of it I may still in these present days work and strive. Your dready constitutional Hallams, your (who's?) are the true revolutionists, that would cut us off wheer asunder from whatsoever went before; representing all that went before as lifeless ashes, as a thing one blessed God one has now no farther trade with. -- --[107]

At another point Carlyle wrote to Milnes (19 Jan. 1844) "You look only into the Future: -- and why, think you, am I looking with such toil of soul into the Past? We shall never have a Future till it start again upon that! I also am looking, as it were exclusively, into the Future; -- perhaps the most Conservative man you could lay hold of in all England at present."[108] All this soul-searching only emphasizes how necessary Carlyle felt it was to bring back the past alive, not dead. This in turn had its effect on how he wrote and on the style he chose to employ. He sought to make the past intelligible, then instructive. It is perhaps from this desire more than any other that we can trace Carlyle's use of shifting tenses, and frequent use of the present tense.

Equally important to the success of Cromwell is the manipulation of voice. In the description of Dunbar Carlyle assumed several different voices. He literally speaks as a different character in successive sentences. It is a device frequently used, in a variety

of ways. While the main types of voice are two, there are multiple varieties of each. In the first Carlyle himself can be identified as the speaker, although this may not have been his intention. In the second, although Carlyle may be present, the initial intent is that others appear to do the talking.

Among the voices Carlyle himself assumes are at least three. In the first instance he is a common historian, attempting to make the period intelligible to modern readers, mainly by pointing out similarities as well as differences between past and present. Carlyle was keenly aware of the need to tell history in a modern idiom. This was apparent in his editorial technique. When dealing with the more historical subject of lay impropriations he explains them, details their suppression, then offers a modern comparison or "translation" concerning the probable public reaction to them. "How would the Public take it now, if . . . the gate of the Opposition Hustings were suddenly shut against mankind, -- if our Opposition Newspapers, and their morning Prophesyings, were suppressed!"[109] In another instance he urges the reader to "modernise the sentiment and subject-matter" of a letter, "for it may be worth his while."[110] Yet there are times when this voice fails, when the idiom, as is its nature, proves untranslateable. Cromwell's notion of Christianity, the key to him and the period, according to Carlyle the common historian, has "died out of all" modern "hearts."[111] The same was true of the Solemn League and Covenant, "the awfulness of which, we, in these days of Custom-house oaths and loose regardless talk, cannot form the smallest notion."[112]

The second voice Carlyle employs is the familiar one in which an anonymous source, none other than Carlyle, is quoted. This voice

is set apart by the deliberate use of quotation marks and the naming of various authors for them. In Cromwell Carlyle quotes "a well-known Writer" or "our impatient friend," or "a work still in manuscript, and not very sure of ever getting printed."[113] In these passages one normally finds a hortatory, sermonising Carlyle. He is still attempting to explain the past, but there is no longer any hint of objectivity or mere suggestion of how an event can be understood. When he quotes himself he has a specific meaning in mind. Its very dogmatism may account for Carlyle's retreat to the security of anonymity, although the play of Carlyle's sense of humor cannot entirely be ruled out. After all, quoting one's self is rather an amusing idea. Yet in the end, the message is a serious one:

> 'On the whole, the cursory modern Englishman cannot be expected to read this Speech: -- and yet it is pity; the Speech might do him good, if he understood it. We shall not again hear a Supreme Governor talk in this strain: the dialect of it is very obsolete; much more than the grammar and diction, forever obsolete; -- not to my regret the dialect of it. But the spirit of it is a thing that should never have grown obsolete. The spirit of it will have to revive itself again; and shine out in new dialect and vesture, in infinitely wider compass, wide as God's known Universe now is, -- if it please Heaven!'[114]

The final voice Carlyle himself assumes is a prophetic one. To some extent this has already been discussed above where Carlyle's language was compared with that of the Bible. In this voice Carlyle does not merely lead the reader across the desert of past history to the promised interpretation, but also prophesies the result of a specific event, anticipating dire consequences if reform does not occur. Obviously, what did happen is not a mystery to modern readers, and "predicting" it from a modern vantage point does not

require the services of a prophet. Yet what did happen, equally obviously, was a mystery to the participants until it occurred. Carlyle plays lambently on this knowledge of the readers and ignorance of the characters. And since he often writes in the present tense his prophesyings do appear to carry more weight. The reader hears the prophecy, but the character does not, and cannot heed the warning. Oblivious to all, the "star-crossed" character suffers a deserved doom, of which the reader has had advance warning.

Two examples will serve to further define this voice. In the first Cromwell's future greatness is anticipated, first by Hugh Peters, then by Carlyle. "Hugh Peters . . . whispers to himself, 'This man will be King of England yet." Which, unless Kings are entirely superfluous in England, I should think very possible, O Peters!"[115] And secondly, there is Carlyle's prophecy about Jenny Geddes and her stool, early in his Introduction: "All Edinburgh, all Scotland, and behind that all England and Ireland, rose into unappeasable commotion on the flight of this stool of Jenny's; and his Grace of Canterbury, and King Charles himself, and many others had lost their heads before there could be peace again."[116]

Also a part of this voice is the vision of eternity Carlyle often finds in seemingly ordinary events. Here Carlyle does not prophesy, except in a general way, but seeks to assign an event its proper significance within eternity. Thus Oliver was a quiet farmer in St. Ives, but also a man "studious of many temporal and many eternal things. His cattle grazed here, his ploughs tilled here, the heavenly skies and infernal abysses overarched and underarched him here."[117] Later, the reference is somewhat more subtle: "An armed Parliament . . . not without a kind of sacredness, and an Oliver Cromwell . . .

under the vault of Heaven."[118] Among the reasons for Cromwell's greatness was his "sympathy with the Perennial."[119] And this sympathy is something that must become universal. "Do not I too look . . . into a kind of Eternal Psalm, unalterable as adamant, -- which the whole world yet will look into?"[120] In references like these Carlyle reaches beyond mere historical chronicle (as he always does) by grasping at history's eternal significance. This also is the prophet's role, and it is this message which Carlyle attempts to convey when using this voice. His inclusion of prophecy exalts the value of history by filling it with meaning and eternal applicability.

There are, however, still further "voices" used in Cromwell. Although the final two are in reality traceable to Carlyle himself, they are somewhat more distant from him, not always easily identifiable as his. The voice is disguised. Before examining these two perhaps one more not Carlyle's should be mentioned, since the final two do relate to it: this is direct quotation from sources. As was noted Carlyle frequently resorts to quotations, which become windows looking onto the action detailed. And Carlyle is often able to use a quotation so that it offers partisan commentary, as well as basic information.

For example, it is interesting to note that often when a quotation is finished Carlyle himself continues it. This is one voice. Though not bounded by quotation marks he carries on in the voice of his source, instead of working in a more subdued paraphrase. Here, for example, he quotes Whitelocke, then continues himself:

> Four dignified Members, of whom Bulstrode was one . . . had met him /Cromwell/ the day before with congratulations . . . 'whom he received with all kindness and respect. . . . They came that night to Aylesbury; where they had much

> discourse . . . as they supped together.' To me Bulstrode, and to each of the others, he gave a horse and two Scotch prisoners: the horse I kept for carrying me: the two Scots . . . I handsomely sent home again without any ransom whatever.[121]

Here Carlyle has merely paraphrased his source in a curious way, but this voice is not always so neutrally used. In another instance the expanded quotation serves as a negative comment on the speaker. Sir Philip Warwick relates his opinion of a speech of Cromwell's to the Long Parliament: "'I sincerely profess, it lessened much my reverence unto that Great Council for this gentleman was very much hearkened unto;' -- which was strange, seeing he had no gold lace to his coat, nor frills to his band; and otherwise, to me in my poor featherhead, seemed a somewhat unhandy gentleman."[122] In a third example Carlyle seemingly quotes Cromwell. Upon the death of his daughter Elizabeth, Carlyle attributes this lament to Cromwell, though he has created almost all of it: "My young, my beautiful, my brave! She is taken from me; I am left bereaved of her. The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away; blessed be the Name of the Lord! -- "[123] This voice is frequently used, especially for Cromwell's words. Its effect on the reader is acceptance of the extended quotation as part of the quotation itself, or possibly the reader's acceptance of Carlyle's insight into the mind of his characters. Carlyle gains an imaginative control of his historical figures that is usually only conceded to novelists over their characters.

Similar to this is another voice which speaks anonymously, but as a contemporary with the action or event being discussed. An example of this came earlier when Carlyle assumed the voice of the defeated Scottish soldier at Dunbar. In detailing the failure

of a royalist rising Carlyle becomes a dejected royalist. "Alas, on the very edge of the appointed hour, as usual, we are all seized; the ringleaders of us are all seized . . . for Thurloe and his Highness have long known what we were upon."[124] Earlier Carlyle spoke as an unnamed member of the Rump Parliament. "We are scornfully called the Rump of a Parliament by certain people; . . . by one name we shall smell as sweet as by another."[125] In a final instance of this voice a wholly anonymous figure reports of the 1655 Protectorate naval operations: "We fear there is little chance of the Plate Fleet this year; bad rumours come from the West Indies too, of our grand Armament and expedition thither."[126]

The voices in Cromwell show Carlyle speaking to his reader in five separate ways. He is an historian attempting to make the past intelligible to the modern reader, and he is a prophet revealing history's wider and deeper meaning, or foreshadowing future events. When Carlyle quotes himself anonymously he is often mid-way between the role of historian and prophet. At times he carries on direct quotations after he has in fact stopped quoting, while at other times he speaks as a contemporary witness of whatever action is detailed. In addition to these voices, all originating in Carlyle himself, his use of extended excerpts and the letters and speeches of Cromwell are also worth mentioning. The total effect is that of a chorus harmoniously singing Cromwell's praises. Each in its own way contributes positively to the representation of Cromwell. The historic voice makes him understandable, the prophetic interprets his actions favorably, the contemporary comments and Carlyle's quotation of himself are often in awe at Cromwell's power and piety, while the extensions of Cromwell's remarks demand our pity and reverential

respect. Even the legitimate quotations are judiciously selected for the positive impression they present of Cromwell.[127]

This dramatic manipulation of voice is surely one of the most remarkable aspects of Carlyle's style in Cromwell. It allows him to be virtually everywhere at once, and helps allow him to create the illusion of the annihilation of space and time he felt necessary for properly told history. In a real sense the instruction he hoped could be derived from history depended on the success of these imaginative devices which he used.

Although there is much in the tone of Carlyle's prose that is Olympian, or perhaps Sinaian is a better word, it does not lack for many more earth-bound qualities that can cause one to delight in it, or perhaps be exasperated by it. Among the former is his sense of humor. While we cannot say of Cromwell as G. B. Tennyson says of Sartor, that it is a funny book, it certainly is true that humor is present. The fact that it is somewhat heavy-handed or grotesque should not disguise its existence. It has been argued by none other than Carlyle himself that "humor is at bottom profoundly serious."[128] To him the essence of humor was love, not contempt; it allows man to sympathize with what was beneath him, and appreciate what is above him, since potentially he is both. Humor, rightly viewed, can be a means of instruction.

Thus we have the closing comment to volume two. Cromwell has just subdued Scotland after Worcester, and seen a just government put on foot there. Carlyle quotes Bishop Burnet's remark that "'We always reckon those eight years of Usurpation a time of great peace and prosperity,'" then carries on himself: "-- though we needed to be twice beaten, . . . before we would accept the same. We, and

mankind generally, are an extremely wise set of creatures."[129] Although the "we" of the quotation refers to the Scots, the "we" of the extension, especially when coupled with "mankind generally" refers to all of us. Carlyle, not without a grim smile, has made the point that mankind generally does not learn from its mistakes. That so self-evident a hero as Cromwell should be almost willfully misunderstood, that good could flow from his actions yet not be attributed to him is a tragedy which must be taken as a comedy if we are not to despair.

There are other examples of human folly at which Carlyle pokes sympathetic fun. When the army forced the eleven members to withdraw from Parliament in June 1647, Carlyle supposes they fled "on account of their health."[130] Again, there is Carlyle's comment on William Prynne, who had his ears cropped twice for his libelous Puritan writings. Carlyle notes "strange as it may look," Prynne "manifested no gratitude, but the contrary, for all that trouble!"[131] And Carlyle is not above pointing a finger at himself. He does so when he speaks of not having suppressed enough of his interpolations to Cromwell's speeches, and also in the "Anti-Dryasdust" chapter where he is the frustrated and vitriolic, yet frequently quoted "impatient friend," who is finally wished "more <u>patience</u>, and better success than he seems to hope."[132] There is an epigram of Niebuhr's requesting the strength to change what is wrong in the world, the serenity to accept what cannot be changed, and the wisdom to know the difference between the two. Carlyle's humor is his attempt to recover that serenity. Manifestly aware of the frequent folly of mankind, and justifiably angry over it, his humor is a realization that he cannot change everything.

If sympathy is an aspect of Carlyle's humor, it is also present in itself. Carlyle ultimately sympathizes with all his characters. He even found points in common with Archbishop Laud, as was shown earlier. Carlyle gives the Levellers a "tributary sigh" even if he still finds them "misguided men" and urges them "Go, repent; and rebel no more."[133] According to Carlyle "One could pity this poor Irish people." Their claims were just "though full of intricacy; difficult to render clear and concessible."[134] In an act of almost unprecedented magnanimity Carlyle "forgives" Dryasdust, for the poor fellow couldn't help himself. For his shortcomings "the Anti-dryasdust reader has by this time learned to forgive that fatal Doctor of Darkness."[135] Thus even Carlyle attempted to learn greater patience as he attempted to effect positive change in men's attitudes. His sympathy and humor are both present in abundance in Cromwell.

A far more exasperating aspect of Carlyle's style is an outgrowth of the prophetic language he often uses, and may well be an inevitable result of it. For Carlyle does not write in a logical way and does not seek to convince a reader with proofs so much as, in the manner of the prophets, persuade him to accept on faith what cannot be finally proven.

One of the book's themes is the heroic quality of Puritanism. The argument in favor of this assertion in "Anti-Dryasdust" breaks itself down to little more than "They are heroic because they believed in God, and attempted to put their faith in action in a way in which I, Thomas Carlyle, approve." Carlyle's advocacy is most important, because of course, Charles and Laud also believed in God, as did the Scots, the Irish, the Levellers and even the Quakers. Carlyle continually asserts there was something special in the Puritan faith,

without ever divulging what that something was. It is called "the last of all our Heroisms" and was the "last glimpse of the Godlike vanishing from this England."[136] Why or how it was heroic, why it vanished, what its nature was are questions never satisfactorily answered.

At another point Carlyle seeks to show Cromwell was not duplicitous or hypocritical regarding his dealings with army and Parliament. He writes:

> Mistakes, misdates; exaggerations, unveracities, distractions; all manner of misseeings and misnotings in regard to it, abound. How many grave historical statements still circulate in the world, accredited by Bishop Burnet and the like, which on examination you will find melt away into after-dinner rumours, -- gathered from ancient red-nosed Presbyterian gentlemen, Harbottle Grimston and Company, sitting over claret under a Blessed Restoration, and talking to the loosely recipient Bishop in a very loose way![137]

One gets the picture of war veterans exaggerating their part in the conflict due to selective memories and drunken braggadoccio. It is implied that all previous histories of the period were based on such accounts. This sort of history is obviously inaccurate and unwarranted, says Carlyle, and may safely be disregarded. But has Carlyle anywhere cited a specific history, and shown where it errs regarding Cromwell? Except in one footnote citing a single incident in a single source coming later in the passage quoted, he has not. This is not to say his statement is incorrect, although he probably exaggerates the error and vitriol of Cromwell's opponents. The point is, that even in a situation that lends itself to logical refutation Carlyle chooses his thunder and lightning approach, letting the burden of proof throughout fall upon the letters themselves,

which he has chosen to interpret favorably. He seems almost incapable of marshaling facts in his arguments. Mark Roberts has written Carlyle "is not like a man attempting a logical demonstration, but rather like a preacher . . . speaking out of the heart of his own conviction, which seems to him to provide the resolution of every imaginable problem." Agreement with Carlyle comes "because we are persuaded by the force of his conviction and his capacity to show us so much so persuasively in the light in which he himself sees it."[138]

On a related subject, Carlyle's treatment of complex issues is often quite simplistic. He can seize an apt metaphor but often does not grasp the historical background for it. For example, here is his treatment of an aspect of the religious controversies of the Civil Wars:

> 'Uniformity of free-growing healthy forest-trees is good; uniformity of clipt Dutch-dragons is not so good! The question, Which of the two? is by no means settled, -- though the Assembly of Divines, and majorities of both Houses, would fain think it so. The general English mind, which, loving good order in all things, loves regularity even at a high price, could be content with this Presbyterian scheme, which we call the Dutch-dragon one; but a deeper portion of the English mind inclines decisively to growing in the forest-tree way, -- and indeed will shoot out into very singular excrescences, Quakerisms and what not, in the coming years. . . . There is like to be need of garden-shears, at this rate! The devout House of Commons, viewing these things with a horror inconceivable in our loose days, knows not well what to do. London City cries, "Apply the shears!" -- the Army answers, "apply them gently; cut off nothing that is sound!" The question of garden-shears, and how far you are to apply them, is really difficult; -- the settling of it will lead to very unexpected results.'[139]

So according to Carlyle it is all a question of natural growth versus over-tended cultivation. Gently applied garden shears is the

proper solution. No doubt it is, and no doubt the metaphor is an apt one. Yet when left by itself it offers the reader no enlightenment on the history and development of the religious struggle or the main points of controversy. What exactly did the opposed groups advocate? What were their tactics, how did the situation develop, what influence did politics or economics have in the settlement of the points at issue? By supplying the reader with a metaphor and little more, these questions are left unanswered.

The same is true of Carlyle's treatment of Cromwell's religion. We search in vain through four volumes for information on this religion. What was Puritanism? What were the central tenets, and how did they differ from the High Anglicanism of Charles and Laud? We discover little more than that Cromwell was aware of Abysses, eternity, heaven and hell. It is not until late in volume four that the reader is told the "grand axis" of the "Puritan Universe" was two Covenants: "one of Works, with fearful Judgment for our shortcomings therein; one of Grace and unspeakable mercy . . . which the Eternal God has vouchsafed to make with His feeble creature Man."[140] Granted that here is Cromwell's Puritanism in a nutshell, the explanation is still not satisfying for that reason. It does not provide a motivation, explanation or justification for Cromwell's actions. One wonders how it is that Carlyle can be credited with revealing the religious significance of the rebellion when he nowhere precisely defines what that religion was, or elsewhere insists that it is incomprehensible. The answer probably lies in the vehemence with which Carlyle iterated and reiterated his assertion of its importance. To even the dullest the message must at last get through, but the more perceptive reader will see that acceptance

of the message on Carlyle's terms is more emotional than logical, for Carlyle is short on specifics, and tends to oversimplify the issues he does discuss. The employment of figurative language, however skillfully wrought or concinnously phrased, is not, strictly speaking, proof.

While such language and argument are the hallmarks of Carlyle's prose, when over-used they are defects since they do not offer the reader a convincing form of proof. Fortunately in Cromwell there is the factual chain formed by the letters themselves, although this chain has a weak link in Carlyle's often erroneous elucidations. The final element of Cromwell includes the remaining aspects of its style, which bind the reader to the text, guide him through the letters and speeches, delight, entertain, enthrall, arouse, serve in short to help convince him that Carlyle is right, his interpretation valid. The Biblical temper, the skillful use of imagery, the stunning ability to manipulate voice and tense all guide one inevitably through the letters to the acceptance of Carlyle's view.

We can see that in Carlyle's concentration on imagery, metaphor and analogy in particular he is working with techniques that best suit his ability and his message. All are forms of comparison, means of relating one element to another, whether it be like to like, or apparently unlike to unlike. All find common ground where it might have been supposed none existed. Carlyle was convinced properly told history had to make such comparisons for it to be instructive. He said it best in a letter to Emerson (29 Aug. 1842): "Thus do the two centuries stand related to me, the seventeenth worthless except precisely in so far as it can be made the nineteenth."[141] The same message comes repeatedly in his early drafts as he struggled

to find the best form for his history. At one point he cries "Some ten tons avoirdupois of ancient and late historians I have read; but what avails it! The Past lies there as in complete enchantment, inaccessibility. Few nations know their History; alas few men, almost no man knows his own!"[142] At another point he asks "Thou too, meanwhile, has thou seen no burning-bush in any kind, heard no still voice, saying I am hath sent thee?"[143] The references are to Old Testament manifestations of God's presence. Yet Carlyle's use of the phrase "in any kind" shows he felt such manifestations continued in different forms from age to age, and needed to be revealed to people for what they were. This was the historian's role. Carlyle saw an element of necessity in relating past ages to the present. There were points of departure to be sure, but far more important were the comparisons. Unless these similarities could be made evident to the reader the past might as well not have existed for all the good it did him. There is of course an analogy between the use of literary devices which compare one element to another, and the comparison of one age to another. Further, in recalling Carlyle's divine universe, how the visible world was a symbol for the invisible God, how the individual heroic life was a manifestation of the divine, one realizes both Carlyle's style and historical thought are steeped in comparisons of one form or another.

By concentrating to the extent he did on the impact of the literary devices utilized, certainly Carlyle more effectively made the past vital to the reader than he would have with more painstaking accuracy and a more pedestrian style. His style, after all, is his attempt to put into practice his thought on the meaning and nature of history.

Here a critical point is reached. However much the style of Cromwell is praised, Carlyle himself would judge the book on the basis of a different response. If these letters, Carlyle wrote FitzGerald (8 April 1846) "put poor mortals off that thrice accursed notion of theirs, that every clever man in this world's affairs must be a bit of a liar too, the consequences would be invaluable!"[144] Carlyle's style was not merely meant to beautify the printed page. It was not literary self-indulgence or "art for art's sake." It was a means to an end, the end being a vigorous awakening of the reader to personal reformation and positive action. Viewed in this sense -- Carlyle's sense -- it is impossible to pass judgment on the efficacy of his style.

Viewing it in a more traditional way -- on its own merits -- we can pass judgment, and it can only be a highly favorable one. Cromwell is quite simply a remarkable book, a work of art. It is strange that few critics have noted this before, while those that have praised the book did so on the basis of its factual accuracy, a claim no longer allowable, or its resurrection of Cromwell's character. Style was largely ignored. Why this happened is difficult to say. It may well be the "oblivion" that for so long engulfed Carlyle's writings generally, and his histories in particular. Many people were long convinced there was little to be said for his writing.

In opening this chapter we maintained an important reason that people continue to read a specific history is its pleasure-giving style, and that the author's frame of reference and artistry are the integral parts of that style. Cromwell has such a style. Whatever one may think of the opinions expressed in it, Cromwell shows Carlyle at his polemic, narrative and artistic best. If the book is

read at all today, it will be largely on these bases. For as an edition of Cromwell's letters it has been superseded. As a general history it always had many gaps. But as a work of art it has the vitality, freshness and brimming vigor found only in the finest historical writing.

Chapter VIII

Cromwell B.C.

(Before Carlyle)

To trace the history of a controversial figure after his death should be a required study for all historians. For such studies find that successive ages interpret the figure's life in widely and wildly different ways, and often that different factions, parties, or, to use the most neutral term, points of view in the same age also voice strong differences of opinion. It has been well-observed that "reputations have no permanence," and that the "slow, final judgment of history" hangs as much on accident or stupidity as it does on painful research or "objective" consideration. Thus a historian discovers that once a great man leaves the stage of life his chief drama has just begun.[1] This should certainly lead to further reflections on history and what exactly it is, but for the moment we can bear this insight in mind while considering the business at hand, which is the tracing of Cromwell's reputation among his countrymen before Carlyle wrote about him. In concentrating on the biographies and histories written about him from about 1810-45, a time of revived interest in the Civil Wars and Cromwell, and when Carlyle was actively concerned with him, several patterns emerge. An initial conclusion is that while in many ways Carlyle was philosophically suited to his great hero, the British people were also fascinated by him. And although his life may, as Carlyle insisted, have been buried under unnameable rubbish, the memory, mis-memory and myth of him always lived and flourished.

One farther remark by way of preface may be offered. Abbott has written "Of all the characters in English history there is not one more vividly remembered, whether for good or ill, than Oliver Cromwell."[2] When we also realize that no other figure is as indispensable to British history, that adore or despise him, one must come to terms with his life, military career, religion and political achievement, then, given the volatility of these subjects, it is easy to see how differences of opinion and interpretation arise.

Cromwell's reputation suffered in the first 150 years after his death. All "losers" do. The man never defeated in warfare, rarely frustrated in any endeavor while alive, lost the battle for his reputation at the Restoration. The son of the King he helped see beheaded, and in whose stead he ruled, recovered his throne after a forced loan of eleven years. Cromwell's laws were almost all overturned, his attempt to settle the nation rejected, and even his corpse disinterred from Westminster Abbey, hung on the gallows, and thrown into an unmarked and unknown grave. In life he was more feared and admired than loved, but was also invulnerable. In death the factions his genius held at bay triumphed by reviling his memory, and attributing to him incredible vices, hypocrisy, prevarication and over-reaching ambition chief among them.

Even in these early days of his reputation there were factions opposing Cromwell for their own reasons. Briefly, the royalists resented the execution of their King and the assault on all authority this act implied. The republicans, while content with that deed felt that by seizing supreme power Cromwell betrayed the cause for which he fought. Then there were the Presbyterians who never fathomed -- or quite forgave -- his religious toleration, or

his overthrow of the Rump Parliament they dominated. At the same time it was precisely those religious independents or Nonconformists who seemed to retain a certain regard and affection for the man who had allowed them largely free exercise of their beliefs.

The three former groups far outnumbered the Nonconformists in political power and influence, and Cromwell's reputation suffered accordingly. One notes briefly the existence of a biography by James Heath titled Flagellum or the Life and Death of O. Cromwell, the Late Usurper (1663). Carlyle peremptorily denominated the author "Carrion Heath," a name that has stuck, and insisted Flagellum was "the chief fountain indeed of all the foolish lies that have circulated about Oliver."[3] The vehemence is justified since Heath saw Cromwell as a "monster," publicly and privately despicable, damnable and base: Cromwell was stripped "of every shred not merely of virtue and ability but of even common decency." Heath's biases were obvious, yet well-suited to the Restoration mind. No doubt because of them this book remained the standard work for decades and was a prime source of misinformation for all biographies that followed.[4]

Yet Cromwell eventually found his defenders, mainly in those who began to expose the grosser inconsistencies of the thoroughly evil interpretations. It was obvious, for example, that he had been a loving father and dutiful husband. More importantly, his military success was given greater credit, while the activist and vigorous foreign policy of his Protectorate came to be appreciated as later monarchs met defeat and humiliation in foreign wars. These views were brought out in two eighteenth century biographies, by Isaac Kimber, Baptist minister, and John Banks, lawyer.[5] At the same time

the way was silently being cleared for later writers by the mole-like species known as antiquarians. Most of the reference works on which Carlyle would draw so heavily were undertaken in this century. They included the Old Parliamentary History (1751-62), the Commons Journals (1803-13), Thurloe's State Papers (1742), the earliest editions of the Somers Tracts, and of course the biographies by Harris (1762) and Noble (3rd ed., 1787). The letters and speeches began to appear in these and other books, while the British Museum was founded in 1759, soon gaining the King's Pamphlets and prime collections of manuscripts, while cataloguers soon began to index these collections. It is a delicious irony that Carlyle, who found so little to praise in the sceptical eighteenth century should eventually have relied so heavily on the productions of that time. By the end of the century opinions had progressed a little, and Lord Shelburne's conclusions may have been typical: Cromwell had yet to receive a just assessment, but was not always a hypocrite, and "had set more things forward than" all the kings who followed him, including William. During his reign "talents of every kind began to show themselves, which were immediately crushed or put to sleep at the restoration."[6]

Yet he had also killed an English king, and despite his vigorous administration and redeeming qualities, this fact weighed heavily against him in most minds. By 1800 "most people probably viewed Cromwell through royalist spectacles."[7] The sharp division of opinion regarding Cromwell still held, while his detractors certainly far outnumbered his supporters throughout the century. Yet he had "something of an underground cult in the late eighteenth century." Somewhat earlier, a club met annually on 30 January, the anniversary of Charles' death, to dine on calf's head and toast the memory of

those responsible.[8] Perhaps in a more serious vein the Corn-law rhymer Ebenezer Elliott's father donned clerical robes every fourth Sunday, and preached "tremendous doctrines of ultra-Calvinism" and also praised "the virtues of slandered Cromwell."[9] Similar are the recollections of Sir John Bowring, intimate of Bentham and a political editor of the Westminster Review in its earliest days, about his grandfather. A Dissenter, "the old Puritan blood . . . flowed strongly in his veins, and a traditional reverence for the Commonwealth was evidenced by a fine mezzotint print of Oliver Cromwell, which hung in his parlour."[10] And in his poem, "The Frank Courtship," George Crabbe writes of "a remnant of that crew,/ Who as their foes maintain, their Sovereign slew" and continued "Cromwell was still their saint." The family was an ordered, prosperous, pious and Nonconformist one. In the living room of their home was a secret picture:

> His stern, strong features, whom they all revered;
> For there in lofty air was seen to stand
> The bold Protector of the conquer'd land;
> Drawn in that look with which he wept and swore,
> Turn'd out the Members, and made fast the door,
> Ridding the House of every knave and drone,
> Forced, thou it grieved his soul, to rule alone.
> The stern, still smile each friend approving gave,
> Then turn'd the view, and all again were grave.

A note to the poem bases this incident in fact, stating "Such was the actual consolation of a small knot of Presbyterians in a country town, about sixty years ago" or 1750, since the original edition came in 1812.[11]

What all this suggests is that many Nonconformists warmly admired Cromwell. From this group of people came the most favorable interpretations of him, while those more establishment-oriented were of a

different mind. For most it was no honor to be compared to him. And it also appears that whenever the political and social climates were threatened, as during the French revolutionary era, Cromwell's reputation declined, while during and after this event it became standard practice to compare and contrast the French and English usurpers[12]. When Carlyle lectured on Napoleon and Cromwell he was not only drawing on his knowledge of both men, but bowing to a popular tradition -- by that time rather stale.

Among the most memorable histories to emerge from the eighteenth century was Hume's. His conclusions deserve notice if only because Carlyle saw himself writing in opposition to his scepticism and its implications for Cromwell. Hume disdained enthusiasm; and Cromwell, "the most dangerous of hypocrites" was also "a great master of fraud and dissimulation." In relating Cromwell's speech to the Barebone's Parliament Hume provided a most un-Carlyleian interpolation when he disapprovingly wrote "I suppose at this passage he cried: For he was very much given to weeping, and could at any time shed abundance of tears." Further, the speech was "full of the same obscurity, confusion, embarrassment, and absurdity, which appear in almost all Oliver's productions." Hume was appalled by the military despotism created, found Cromwell's foreign policy "pernicious," his domestic administration inconsistent and his usurpation probably necessary, but the product of ambition. Ability to manipulate men, and resolute action were his greatest traits. Such was the anti-enthusiast Gospel according to Hume.[13]

Yet this canon did not have its inerrancy go long unquestioned, and was certainly heretical to some. In the nineteenth century there is evidence of a revival of interest in Cromwell, or more properly

the entire Civil War era up to the Glorious Revolution. There are several probable reasons. In the first place, the Civil Wars, like most such unfortunate events, had divided families, destroyed life and property, changed the national and individual way of life in subtle and unsubtle ways forever. It was a period that could not be forgotten since every family, if it were old enough, and every town or county, had been touched by it. There were also the inevitable comparisons between English and French revolutions, while most observers of the latter felt themselves better able to interpret the former as a result. It was also somewhat easier to study the rebellion because of the improved availability of primary sources. Perhaps most importantly there was the realization that the modern British constitution had grown out of the seventeenth century struggles, and that study of that time could shed further light on modern political problems. A symptom of this renewed interest or even a small cause of it was the historical novels of Sir Walter Scott. They laced the English and Scottish past with chivalry, romance and believability, while Scott's poem "Rokeby" and novel Woodstock both dealt specifically with the Civil Wars.[14]

Histories of this period show the differing views and more careful scholarship. To a certain extent they vary with the political bias of the author. More conservative writers generally had less praise for Cromwell than liberals or radicals, but even here one feels that no one individual is representative of his party.

Among conservatives Robert Southey's was a prominent voice. As one might expect, he emphasized the disruptions of the wars, the violence done to established institutions, and the nobility of the martyred Charles. Cromwell by contrast was a "rare dissembler,"

a "hard and vulgar ruffian." He concluded

> He gained three kingdoms; the price which he paid for them was innocence and peace of mind. He left an imperishable name, so stained with reproach, that notwithstanding the redeeming virtues which adorned him it were better for him to be forgotten than to be so remembered.[15]

In another work his assessment of the Puritans is utterly negative, yet is coupled with backhanded praise of the usurper. Their religion was "the triumph of hypocrisy and fanaticism (always the most loving of allies)"; this triumph came before Cromwell "had taken into his hands the power, which, had it lawfully been placed there, he, of all living men, was most worthy to have wielded."[16] The implication here is that Cromwell was bad mainly because of his assaults on the established order and the devious ways in which he rose to power. Legitimacy of rule would seemingly have justified his actions.[17]

Looking at liberal estimates the overall assessment is fairer, praise for Cromwell is less grudging, while the religious issues of the time are more often than not played down at the expense of political or constitutional questions. Representative of many is Thomas Kitson Cromwell's Oliver Cromwell and his Times (1821). Writing for the liberal opinions of his day, previous histories, especially Hume's, were criticized. The sceptic "was by nature . . . incapacitated to estimate aright the actions, and probable motives and intentions of men, living in an age characterized by religious profession not less than by political warmth."[18] The potential advantage to be gained from this insight is then thrown away by a survey of the rise of constitutional government, the assertion that political liberty was the root of the conflict, and the belief that Cromwell divorced utterly his private piety from his public

dissimulation.[19] Yet the King's execution, though condemned, was the inevitable result of his tyranny, by which is meant his suppression of political liberties. Cromwell's foreign policy, moderation in religion, and judicious settlement of Scotland are all praised.[20] "Never," concludes the author, "since the days of Alfred, had a prince ruled over England, who so conspicuously united in himself all the qualities of a great, wise, and good governor." And in the inevitable comparison between Cromwell and Napoleon, the former was "a greater, and more estimable character."[21]

Among the most authoritative, moderate and circumspect of Whig historians was Henry Hallam, whose Constitutional History (1827) had gone through seven editions by 1854, and was still referred to as "standard" in his biography in the DNB. Though his tone was judicious and evenhanded his judgments were decisive, and colored by his reverence for the British Constitution. Though Hallam found Cromwell guilty of "habitual dissimulation," and judged the Major Generals' rule an "unparalleled tyranny," and did not feel his administration of the laws was equitable -- an uncommon opinion -- his achievement was nonetheless important.[22] Hallam also felt that Cromwell's rise to power resulted from "A train of favouring events, more than any deep-laid policy." He was the pre-eminent man of his era, possessed an "undeniable superiority over his contemporaries," and his bundling out of the corrupt Rump and assumption of the Protectorate "was a necessary and wholesome usurpation, however much he may have caused the necessity."[23]

Hallam's book provoked a furious and now forgotten rejoinder from Southey, who accused him of toeing a party line in his writing and of attempting "to palliate and vindicate the crimes of a faction."

It was the Parliament, and not Charles that was intolerant, while Southey accepted Hume's incredible assertion that Archbishop Laud was more tolerant than Cromwell.[24] But a greater writer, historian and Whig also penned a review that has outlasted both its subject and Southey. Writing in the Edinburgh Review, Macaulay championed Cromwell in a vigorous, unequivocal way:

> Cromwell was emphatically a man. He possessed, in an eminent degree, that masculine and full-grown rubustness of mind, that equally diffused intellectual health, which . . . has peculiarly characterised the great men of England. Never was any ruler so conspicuously born for sovereignty. . . .
> No sovereign ever carried to the throne so large a portion of the best qualities of the middling orders -- so strong a sympathy with the feelings and interests of his people. He was sometimes driven to arbitrary measures; but he had a high, stout, honest, English heart. . . . Had his ambition been of an impure or selfish kind, it would have been easy for him to plunge his country into continental hostilities on a large scale, and to dazzle the reckless factions which he ruled, by the splendour of his victories.[25]

Macalay adds, that although no party has championed Cromwell, "truth and merit at last prevail."[26] Although such an assertion would have been questionable to many of his fellow Whigs, such a vindication coming 27 years before Carlyle is quite striking. The main distinction between the two writers concerns Macalay's emphasis on individual liberty and his near failure to mention religion as a motivation for the Civil Wars. One wonders how widely shared his conclusions were, though certainly in some aspects his opinions were commonplace. Abbott calls him "the voice of triumphing middle-class Liberalism, to Cromwell's virtues very kind, and to his faults a little blind."[27]

Perhaps a better example of popular liberal opinion was the assessment of the Penny Magazine, the periodical of the Society for

the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge. Founded by Henry, Lord Brougham in 1825, the Society sought individual improvement through the publication of books, maps, an encyclopedia, and a magazine whose circulation was at one point 200,000 copies per month.[28] Though the Society refused to involve itself in political questions, and thereby reaped the ire of radicals, a progressive spirit does animate most of its publications, including a brief biography of Cromwell in the Penny Monthly for September 1839. Here he is seen as public-spirited and an enemy to tyranny, but also ambitious. Certain mythical activities are still attributed to him, and indeed always came in the popular historical literature associated with him. Here, for example, Cromwell and Hampden were said to have been about to sail for America when an express order from Charles I halted their embarkation. Actually, this never happened. It also detected the streak of ambition in Cromwell during the fen-draining controversies of the 1630s, while most writers were content to descry this trait after the battle of Worcester, or during the debate over the Self-denying Ordinance. Yet, shades of Macaulay, this ambition was not vicious or solely self-serving, his march to total power was often forced upon him, and his royalist opponents were far more odious and tyrannical than he was. The moderate tone of this article puts it squarely in line with liberal opinion of the time.[29]

The radicals' contempt for a Whig-dominated Society extended to its moderate view of Cromwell. Though some radicals admired his ability to get things done, most deplored his rejection of republican methods in accomplishing them. They felt he betrayed the cause for which he fought.[30] In a Westminster Review article attributed to Andrew Bissett the view is taken that the Civil Wars were necessary

because of Charles' tyranny. This view, Bissett contends "is now acknowledged by all those . . . whose opinion is of any value." The Independent leaders were sincere in their desire for republican government "with a few base exceptions." The base exception Cromwell is condemned as a hypocrite. "Every previous ally to his ambition had been purchased with assiduous falsehood, art, and management." This nasty assessment ends by noting "the pleasing unanimity with which Whig and Tory writers have of late years eulogised" Cromwell, a "hateful" oppressor. It was the Independents ("the really honest men of the Commonwealth") who deserved praise. Cromwell today is respected and apologised for because "He did more service to the few as a traitor, than he had ever done them mischief as an honest man."[31]

Another radical was John Forster. Although his own views became more conservative over time, he wrote his biography of Cromwell in 1838-9 while in his mid-twenties, when his own reformist beliefs and associations with radical periodicals were at their strongest. Raised in the theologically liberal Unitarian church, he attended for a time the Nonconformist University College. Accompanying his biography of Cromwell were similar studies of Sir John Elliot, Strafford, Pym, Hampden, Vane and Marten. One is tempted to view his career as typifying the resurgence in interest in the seventeenth century, since his earlier writing included a play (1828) about an ageing cavalier in Charles II's reign, followed by articles on Pym and Eliot, and his biographies. Despite a frenetic schedule as drama and literary critic, and editor of the Examiner, conscientious assistance to his literary friends, and an eventual position in the Lunacy Commission, he published further on the period, and was

encouraged in his enterprises by Carlyle.[32]

In 1838-9 his view of Cromwell was that of an unreconstructed republican. Confessing that "in his separate qualities a greater man has probably never lived" he analyzed the ultimate failure of his policies. "That curse was his WANT OF TRUTH, and could only have been implanted in such a nature by some early scheme of the fatal ambition which he realized in later life." He dragged down to his low level "the more virtuous and more able designs of the yet immortal statesmen he supplanted" which led to the inevitable Restoration. With this as a basis of judgment, Forster detects in Cromwell's career hypocrisy, ambition and prevarication, the usual run of vices.[33] His florid prose and smugly self-assured vitriol cause one to wonder why this biography of all others was praised by Carlyle. In the first place, the men were friends, and a friend's efforts were usually not subject to Carlyle's public spleen. Secondly, Carlyle's praise in "Of the Biographies of Oliver" is quite carefully worded, as Forster's biographer points out, referring mainly to the author's industry, and not his opinions.[34] However, if Forster's book is read with greater care, some embryonic insights which Carlyle would later develop, and similarities between the two men's approaches to history can be found. Disagreement is not as complete as it may appear. Forster, for example, lovingly details Oliver's mother's character from her portrait, a favorite device of Carlyle's.[35] In speaking of the legends surrounding Cromwell's youth Forster defends relating them by claiming "to whatever has been truly believed . . . belong some of the most sacred privileges of truth itself."[36] Here one is reminded of Carlyle's attitude towards Jenny Geddes. And finally, Forster sensed

something of the importance of religion to Cromwell when he noted his "most intense manifestations of religion . . . preceded his greatest resolves, and went hand in hand with his greatest deeds." He made it clear to family and servants "that even they had immortal souls."[37] Certainly this humble piety would be emphasized by Carlyle to the exclusion of other traits, and his insights may have been aided by reading Forster. Yet on balance Forster's assessment remains an overwhelmingly negative one, which Carlyle rejected decisively, even as he forebore direct criticism.[38]

In examining the opinions regarding Cromwell as they broke down along rough political lines, we see that broad differences exist not only between groups but within them. Macaulay's assessment, for example, is certainly the most glowing, and went far beyond the opinions of his fellow Whigs. Yet with the possible exception of the conservatives all groups found something praiseworthy about Cromwell. In the nineteenth century he was a partially restored figure: a great Englishman, a vigorous ruler, a flawed man. What is missing in nearly all of these assessments is a convincing appreciation of the value of religion in his life and actions.

For this insight we must turn to the writings of the Nonconformists. Among the earliest to write on Cromwell was the Rev. Daniel Neal, whose History of the Puritans (1732-8) was for its time remarkably favorable to Cromwell, putting the best construction on his actions. While others wrote of his hypocrisy in playing off parties against each other Neal wrote "Cromwell had the skill not only to keep" them "divided, but to increase their jealousies of each other." The normal bitter condemnation of the Major-Generals is blandly excused because it "provided for the security of his government

at home." Neal admitted that Cromwell knew some of his taxes were illegal, but pointed to the extraordinary times as a justification, then equivocated: "How far this reasoning will excuse the Protector, or vindicate his conduct, must be left with the reader." One's impression is that necessity was reason enough for Neal, especially when Cromwell's devotion to religious liberty is also considered. After all, it was necessary to keep down the royalists, whose restoration to power Neal well knew brought a swift, harsh end to the toleration of Cromwell's stewardship. As to his piety, he fought "for the cause of religion and liberty," not merely political liberty. "He always went to prayer before battle, and returned solemn thanks for his success afterwards."[39] His life was ordered by his religion: he "was regular in his private and public devotions: he retired constantly every day to read the scriptures and" to pray. And while Cromwell's actions and religion are not uniformly praised, as where Neal condemns Cromwell's seeing the hand of God in battle victories, the tone is altogether moderate and favorable. For "who can penetrate the heart," concludes Neal, "to see whether the outward actions flow from an inward principle?"[40]

Another Nonconformist minister and a better historian was Rev. Robert Vaughan, a Congregationalist, Professor of History at University College, editor of the British Quarterly Review, and ardent advocate of the benign influence of the Puritans on the development of English civil liberties. Vaughan wrote extensively on the seventeenth century, while the tone of his work on Cromwell is best expressed by his review (1846) of Carlyle's book. He wrote not as a convert, but as one of the long-faithful elect rejoicing over, while subtly patronising one who has finally seen the light.

> But it is due to ourselves to say, that for such views of the character of Cromwell, we owe nothing to the writings of Mr. Carlyle. These views we derived some twenty years since from those sources of information to which Mr. Carlyle has repaired more recently; and we think we could make it appear that our modern puritans have not now to begin to understand the true character of Cromwell, though it may be quite true, as Mr. Carlyle supposes, that our literati and our dilletanti people, for whom his book is especially intended, have not a little to unlearn on this subject.[41]

In an earlier work, Memorials of the Stuart Dynasty (1831), Mr Vaughan blamed the narrowness of the Elizabethan religious settlement for the rise of the Puritans. It was the Queen who was intolerant, not her pious subjects who merely sought reform in external matters of form, and not in doctrine. When he reached Cromwell he did not blindly vindicate, but praised his character even as he condemned shortsighted detractors; certain "historical critics" he noted "have made many shrewd discoveries of hypocrisy and profound contrivance." These observations "have had less connexion with the common sense" than the imagination and passion of their authors. The Barebone's Parliament Hume had ridiculed "is not to be understood without bearing in mind the religious character of the army," the man who called it, and those who attended. Cromwell was sincerely tolerant because sincerely pious: his excesses were, as Neal before him had claimed, called for by the times.[42] In a later work Vaughan went further in his vindication. Cromwell was now a wise ruler, who if judged fairly "will not be that compound of everything guilty in ambition, vulgar in sentiment, and hateful in hypocrisy, which it has been the pleasure of our fashionable writers since 1660 to depict." His religion was that of the Puritans. While most saw hypocrisy in his "language and conduct" Vaughan claimed his sincerity was "beyond reasonable doubt. His private correspondence, and his

death-bed, afford sufficient evidence on this point." And though Cromwell was not incapable of dissimulation, the wonder was that he practised it so infrequently, given the chaotic age in which he lived.[43] In a final work the same conclusions are re-emphasized. Cromwell "was really animated by those strong religious feelings," and "his religious fervour generally came to the aid of his political objects, making them appear as the biddings of Providence." Vaughan sees some danger in this policy and attitude, but the importance comes in his recognition of the religious sincerity of the man, however he erred in attempting to practice his beliefs.[44]

There is one final writer, born in Scotland, from a Nonconformist background, a man originally marked for the ministry, but who chose instead to go to London and seek his fortune in the field of literature. This was John Robertson, the young, brash, upstart assistant-editor of the London and Westminster Review, who had snatched from Carlyle's open grasp the proposed review of Cromwell. Espinasse rightly points out his article had been unjustly forgotten. In remembering it here we are struck by the similar conclusions the two men reached, and feel their similar backgrounds help explain this.

The Carlyle and Robertson story was told in chapter one. But there is a final episode and an epilogue. Robertson's article appeared in the Review for October 1839, about six months after Carlyle's lectures on "Revolutions of Modern Europe," which dealt with Cromwell and Puritanism, and about six months before the lecture on Cromwell in Hero-worship. The article was a total vindication of Cromwell, and is virtually identical to Carlyle's lecture and later writings. But for all this similarity it is likely that Carlyle's lingering ire over the disrespect and seeming contumely

Robertson had shown caused him to ignore his article. Ignorant of the controversy Espinasse incautiously praised it in Carlyle's presence. "I never read his trash" came the angry reply, while Jane remarked "I thought it very beautiful." Not being one to forego the last word Carlyle rejoined that "Robertson could not form a coherent image of anything."[45] By his own admission Carlyle had not read the work, although one cannot help wondering if he might have glanced at it, since in the same number of the offending Review was Sterling's pleasing estimate of his own work. Certainly Carlyle read that. The final incident occurred just after Carlyle's lecture on Cromwell, when an excited Robertson exclaimed "I am glad to see, Carlyle, that you have adopted my theory of Cromwell." Masson relates the immediate "knock-down" reply: "Didn't know, sir, that you had a theory of Cromwell."[46]

All we can say is, that if Carlyle was ignorant of Robertson's work, as is likely, it was his loss, for Jane was right. The article is perceptive, masterly, beautiful. It does not break new ground in that documents or manuscripts sources are given, but the interpretation goes far beyond the attempted judicious evenhandedness of previous writers. Most found something unjustifiable or reprehensible in the life, actions and thought of Cromwell, however much they found to praise. Robertson only found much to praise.

He began by insisting Cromwell should be approached in a spirit "of appreciative narration" and not judgmentally since odds were "the attempt of the biographer or reviewer involves an effort of the less to comprehend the greater." In making his own attempt Robertson is at his most convincing regarding Cromwell's conversion. His own training, if not his convictions are evident when he writes

that conversions "are among the deepest and most real facts in the history of the heart of man," and asserts there are two kinds: "changes from one life view to another, and from indifference to earnestness regarding views already entertained."[47] Cromwell's conversion was of the latter kind, but the effect it had on him, how profoundly it changed his life and outlook, was not well understood, for "the spiritual theory of a man determines, in a great degree, the results to which his judgment comes." The power of just such quickened convictions was what animated Cromwell from the time of his conversion. The "change in his soul" contended Robertson ". . . so piercingly acts on his nature, that it becomes a new and regenerated thing." He continues:

> The question is not what we think of the particular creed which Cromwell adopted; but what it was to him, and what fruits it brought forth in his life. The views which it introduced to him of God, and his love in the cross of Christ, of life, death, eternity, and a judgment to come, wrought in him those bitter and vehement self-convictions of a life unworthy of the loftiest aims and destinies which are canted about too tritely by religionists, and dismissed too summarily by philosophers, as repentance for sin. The ale-house, the gaming-table, women, wine, quarter-staff, and even the ambitious promptings of his boyish dreams and recitations, would now appear sinful, destructive of his soul and his eternal welfare --madness in a man whose bubble life might burst into immortality ever/y/ hour -- whose every thought was seen by an All-seeing eye, and whose every deed was liable to the punishment of an omnipotent avenger.[48]

In some respects one finds greater satisfaction in Robertson's explanation of what religion meant to Cromwell than in Carlyle's more rhetorical approach. Be that as it may, from this point forward Cromwell can do no wrong. He was too large-souled a character to be understood by his contemporaries, his execution of the King was a blow for freedom, his religious and army policies farsighted.

And there are unequivocal claims for his veracity: "There is not a particle of proof against the veracity of Oliver Cromwell." "Of all the special falsehoods laid to his charge, there is not one which will bear the scrutiny of a moment."[49] In discussing the Barebone's Parliament he praises these men, however narrow some of them were, but calls their Puritan beliefs "the deepest and noblest of an age." Here Robertson is close to Carlyle's view (or vice versa) of the heroism of the Puritans. There is also similarity about their views on kingship. Cromwell <u>was</u> a king, Robertson insists: "the golden sceptre of the monarchy of his country" was "his by the eternal fitness of things . . . by the will of a God whose inscrutable pavilion is among the clouds, and whose decrees are hidden as the silent caverns of the great sea."[50]

One is amazed by the striking similarity between Carlyle and Robertson. The intensity of the article, the brilliant advocacy of the man, the perceptive analysis of his beliefs and faith-animated actions make this article among the most memorable ever written on Cromwell. If Robertson had just such a piece in mind when dealing with Carlyle, it is no wonder he usurped the topic. However, Carlyle's refusal to consult the piece out of pique, or an unfavorable view of Robertson's intellect does not reflect well on him. It shows him once again ignoring sources of information, yet still presuming to judge them. More damaging is the sense one gets from Carlyle's letters, drafts and this incident that he really believed he alone could reveal the greatness of Cromwell, that his insight was more profound than any other man's. This arrogance is justified to a point, but not against the likes of Robertson, many of his Nonconformist forebears, or even Macaulay.[51] By virtually ignoring their

opinions and work Carlyle helped create the still-lingering myth that he alone was responsible for restoring Cromwell to his rightful historical eminence. If the study of the histories and opinions of Carlyle's time have shown anything, it is that there was a great divergence of opinion, and that much of it was favorable, some for reasons which Carlyle would have approved.

To help demonstrate this we must pause for a moment on the eve of Cromwell's publication. As Carlyle was fussing over his final proof corrections in August and September 1845 an interesting series of letters was printed in the Times. They disputed whether Cromwell deserved a statue in the Houses of Parliament, since all legitimate kings had one. Certainly this shows how living a part of his nation's history Cromwell remained. To be sure, the subject was controversial, but the majority of the letters professed strong admiration for Cromwell and the proposal. One correspondent wondered how a statue could be refused to "a ruler by God's grace and the might of his own soul" while another compared past and present eras and found the present inferior. A symptom of this was the present generation's lack of appreciation of Cromwell. His accomplishments were lasting compared to those of the modern "idle followers of a barren expediency."[52] A spirited anti-Puritan rejoinder appeared next and insisted Cromwell had no lasting accomplishments. Also referred to were the "hollowness of his sincerity, his hypocrisy, and the base selfishness of his motives." The hero-worshippers were back next on 9 and 11 September with one writing, "Englishmen, upon looking back upon the times of the 17th century, will never cease to regard with pride the interval of the Protector's reign." Another wrote Cromwell was "the greatest Englishman," a figure "rough

cast from the hand of nature, but imbued with some of her grandest elements" including a "most firm belief in the truths of Christianity."[53] Two days later the final anti-statue letter was printed; remembering Cromwell thus, it was claimed, would "offer a reward to revolt and anarchy." The final letter in the series was an equivocal one, claiming history belonged "to no one faction, but to the whole world, the past, the present, and to come." Since Cromwell was a part of history, his memory deserved preservation; and that preservation apparently demanded, or at least allowed a statue.[54]

It would seem that if Carlyle wanted to make a hero of Cromwell, he would not lack supporters. Other writers had praised him, but Carlyle's book was different from all that had preceded it. Abbott gives two reasons. First, Carlyle brought the letters and speeches together in one book, and "blew away much of the chaff and dust which had obscured" them, then he "danced and sang, and shouted and objurgated over the result till the world came to see. Having seen, they believed."[55] While Abbott is certainly the most noteworthy Cromwellian of the century he has neglected to highlight the test of religious sincerity Carlyle applied to Cromwell's life. It was on this basis that Cromwell passed with a perfect paper. Reviews of Carlyle confirm that Cromwell's reputation was greatly aided by Carlyle's rehabilitative study, although they also show a continuing dramatic division over his character. Still, the book went far to make Cromwell more popular, fashionable and accessible to the general reader. Whatever else might be said, Carlyle's Cromwell was a potentially convincing partisan portrayal.

Some refused to be convinced. The two most famous dissenters were J. B. Mozley and R. W. Church, both Oxford Movement alumni, and

staunch Anglicans. Writing initially in the Guardian, which paper he served as literary editor of and helped found, Church was highly critical of the life and accomplishments of Cromwell, summing up as follows:

> We will do /Carlyle/ this justice, -- we believe that he meant to bring out a genuinely English idea of excellence, to portray a man of rude exterior and speech, doing great things in a commonplace and unromantic way. But he must match his ideal with something better than Cromwell's distorted and unreal character, his repulsive energy, his dreary and ferocious faith, his thinly veiled and mastering selfishness.[56]

Mozley was of a similar mind, asserting near the end of a long review that he was "simply performing an act of judicial morality, in applying to Cromwell the name of hypocrite," while Puritanism was by nature immoral and hypocritical.[57]

Others refused to accept Carlyle's version. Tait's Edinburgh ~~Review~~ Magazine found little to praise in it, referring to his elucidation of the first letter -- the essence of the book -- as "cant -- of a new mintage." Carlyle's justification of the Irish massacres, the reviewer insisted he could not himself believe, while the message of the book was that heroes "may shuffle and equivocate and lie very much like small men; but then it is for grand and godlike purposes." Betraying his republican sentiments the reviewer notes Carlyle "finds hardly one word to say for . . . the high-minded and truly great men" who paved the way for Cromwell "while his objects seemed pure, disinterested, and patriotic." He concluded by likening Carlyle to the flunkeys he condemned, since he chose to paint Cromwell without warts.[58]

Obviously there were many who would not be dissuaded from their negative view. But that something was happening is evidenced by a

brief, somewhat whining notice in Chamber's Edinburgh Journal on 11 April 1846. It predicted a "rage for Cromwell" in order to make up for two hundred years of maltreatment. "Mr. Carlyle has set the fashion, and already Cromwell ribbons are sported at many inferior lapells. No one can now be suffered to say a word against this celebrated personage, under pain of an imputation of Dryasdustism, flunkeyism, and many other isms terrible to weak brains." The notice condemned the adulation claiming Cromwell was, after all, a tyrant, however well-intentioned.[59] In Lowe's Edinburgh Magazine similar sentiments were expressed, although the great reversal Cromwell's historical fortunes had met with were given a more considered treatment. It was strange that

> a hypocrite and usurper, should now, all of a sudden, come to be regarded, by a repentant nation, as the best and truest of its heroes; and this apparently in consequence of the secret exertions of a single literary man, living in a retired manner in one of the little quiet streets that run at right angles to the Thames river at Chelsea![60]

The reviewer justly remarked the necessary distinction between Cromwell's actions and the moral force animating them. He claimed that while someone "twenty or thirty years ago," may have written "some sneaking diffident passage in some unheard of book, in praise of Cromwell" it is left to Carlyle "to claim the glory of the present reaction" since his penetration to the man's moral greatness was the most thorough.[61]

This is probably the most perceptive review. Virtually all condemned Carlyle's extravagant language and praised the thoroughness of his research, neither judgment as tenable today as in 1846. When it came to Cromwell all expressed reservations about some of his

actions, most notably his part in Charles' execution or in the Irish campaign. However strong the criticism most had also to admit that Cromwell was a sincerely religious man, and all thanks to Carlyle for pointing it out! The reviewer for Chambers's Edinburgh Journal was convinced "Oliver was from the first a sincerely religious man, both in thought and feeling." Carlyle made clear "the self-consistency of the whole theory . . . on which Cromwell proceeded." Against such evidence the "supposition of hypocrisy is preposterous."[62] The Tory Blackwood's review, largely negative, was by William Henry Smith, a minor poet and philosopher. He felt Carlyle's view of Puritanism was "simply the most paradoxical, absurd, unintelligible, mad business we ever encountered in our times." Overleaf however, comes the admission: "If there is any one who still believes that Cromwell was a thorough hypocrite, that his religion was a systematic feint to cover his ambitious designs, the perusal of these volumes will entirely undeceive him." The "coarse caricature" of restored royalists had lasted long enough. Cromwell was a "conscientious zealous Puritan" and any just estimate of him had to take this into account, although to Smith Puritanism remained a thing unpleasant.[63]

In the Dublin University Magazine the conclusion was similar. However much Cromwell deceived himself "the theory of" his "hypocrisy must . . . be forever discarded."[64] In the North British Review James Moncreiff, Edinburgh-born lawyer, politician and eventually Carlyle's successor as Rector of Edinburgh University, took him to task for his "most transparent vanity," sarcastically noting that he seemed to believe he alone was capable of understanding the past. "He alone can discern the hidden meaning of past heroisms, to which

an age of flunkeys and dilettantis is blind." Moncreiff then praised Carlyle's "singular realizing power" and conceded "the indisputable truth and fidelity of his portrait." The letters helped, of course: "We think he comes out in his correspondence free from all suspicion of indirect dealing or duplicity."[65] The Spectator agreed. "His unmoved steadiness throughout his career tells, too, in favour of the hypothesis of a deep religious conviction always actuating him with the notion that he was doing the Lord's business."[66] And finally, the Athenaeum, in its notice of the Supplement (20 June 1846) summed up the previous half-year's criticism, and incidentally anticipated the judgment of history from that time forward: "Henceforth, the conscientious historian will hesitate to present Cromwell as an ambitious hypocrite." Cromwell was now a "sincere, earnest man."[67]

Among those praising the book were a class who insisted with varying degrees of vehemence "We told you so!" One suspects these men either of opportunism or Nonconformist ties. In the Athenaeum's first notice (6 Dec. 1845) the reviewer insisted that for 25 years he had believed the hypocrisy "verdict was pronounced in the absence of evidence."[68] The Times (17 April 1846) was blunter. "We have never regarded Oliver Cromwell as a hypocrite" it huffed, then amusedly noted that Carlyle's version went a bit far, since it ascribed to Cromwell all the virtues of Adam before the Fall.[69]

But the most thorough statement came from our old acquaintance Robert Vaughan. His review was somewhat prickly and condescending, noting that Carlyle had done a better job than could have been expected from a man "deeply averse" to "historical investigation, in its proper sense." Carlyle brought no new light to the subject, he

asserted, nor had he discovered any long-hidden truth, for "many thousands of reading, thoughtful men have long since seen our parliamentary leaders in the time of Charles I as Mr. Carlyle now sees them; but through some strange illusion, it has been concluded that conceptions which are new to our author must of course be new to all the world beside."[70]

It is probably not mistaken to sense some irritation here, for Vaughan was among the most learned Cromwellians then writing. Yet Carlyle had cited only one of his many books, termed it "waterier" than most, apparently did not consult and may not even have known his other works, and still presumed to understand the period better than all his predecessors and contemporaries.[71] Worse than that, he was now being credited with having been the first to understand Cromwell and his period.

Vaughan was delighted that more people were now aware of Cromwell's religious sincerity, but frustrated that all the credit was going to one man. It was a fair complaint, for as we have seen it was Vaughan and his fellow Nonconformists who persistently praised Cromwell, attempted to mitigate his excesses, and appreciated the power of religion on his actions. Most of these efforts seemed to go unnoticed, except within the small circle of the faithful. Vaughan's more patient scholarship was suddenly eclipsed by a brilliant, if superficial piece of popular scholarship. Still, credit where due must be given. Superficial yes, influential nevertheless, Carlyle's Cromwell, more than any other historical work, convinced people of the man's religious sincerity and has gone far to make such views orthodox. Yet at the same time Carlyle did exaggerate his own achievement and it did begin to be accepted at his face

value. Thus grew up the lingering myth that it was this book alone that vindicated Cromwell.

Chapter IX

The Heritage of Cromwell (and Cromwell)

Much of the historical literature available in Carlyle's day was favorable to Cromwell. Most writers praised some aspects of his career. Especially among the still waters of nonconformity feeling ran deep if also silently in Cromwell's favor. It was in this tradition that Carlyle wrote, although his book went far beyond the attempted judicious impartiality of Vaughan or Neal and transcended Robertson's essay in literary and historical importance. Yet Carlyle was not the first to revise the "accepted" interpretation of Cromwell, nor was he alone in restoring Cromwell to eminence. There were a group of historians representative of a large number of the British people who felt much as Carlyle did and were thus favorably disposed to accept his interpretation. True believers, after all, do not need converting.

Thomas Erskine's letters to Carlyle bear this out. An advocate and theologian, this friend of Carlyle's numbered among his correspondents many of the religious leaders of the day. Free-thinking on doctrinal matters, he always professed his indebtedness to Calvinist theology. He was also keenly interested in Carlyle's work on Cromwell, offering encouragement and minor assistance over the years. His views on the Puritans and Cromwell were typical of many:

> Proceed with your Puritans -- it is the work given you to do -- Blessed are they who see a work set before them, & are conscious of a capacity to do it. It is a great undertaking to lift them out of the rubbish. If you love them well enough, you will find out their mystery of life. Why do you love them? If you could explain to yourself & to others that <u>why</u>, the business would be well-advanced -- for it is no dead thing that you love.[1]

He then went on to quote Richard Baxter favorably on Cromwell:

> It is a curious thing that he says about "his natural hilarity being such as other men have only when they have taken a cup too much." He says also, What seems opposed to other testimony, that he was "of excellent parts for affection & oratory." He was one of the Joetuns, or what do you call the Norse Titans.[2]

On 24 November 1841 he wrote again, saying "I hope you are proceeding with Oliver's life -- he was a grand fellow & full of good English domestic life I am persuaded." The problem was not everyone else was persuaded, and primary sources about the man were rare. "It would be a pleasure," Erskine continued, "to light on an early or at all events an inner collection of letters . . . to show what he was before he made the move, or what he <u>really</u> was, after it."[3] Erskine and many others cast in the nonconformist mold were convinced Cromwell was no hypocrite long before Carlyle wrote.

Yet it is evident he did change many minds and make a favorable view of Cromwell not only more fashionable, but more tenable. Carlyle did convince nearly everyone of Cromwell's sincerity and piety; this is perhaps his greatest achievement as historian. Certainly such views are as commonplace today, 140 years after Carlyle wrote, as any views on a controversial figure can be. Carlyle has influenced people who have scarcely heard of him, and never read him. Such an achievement is not in the least diminished by pointing out the influence other writers may have had on Carlyle, or the contributions others made to restoring Cromwell's reputation. No one can ignore the scholarly contributions of Professors Firth and Gardiner,who have respectively written the standard biography of Cromwell and history of the period, both largely agreeing with and helping confirm Carlyle's views. Yet a considerable number of

Carlyle's biographers have insisted on giving him more than his due.

It started with Froude. Though arguably correct when he wrote Cromwell was "by far the most important contribution to English history, which has been made in the present century" he was unarguably wrong to claim "Carlyle was the first to break the crust which has overlaid the subject of Cromwell since the restoration." The vindication was important but Froude's sweeping statement takes no account of the favorable writings on Cromwell before Carlyle.[4]

David Wilson, writing in 1925 is effusive in his praise of the book, noting "we can hardly realize to-day how great it was" when published, and that "The condemnation of Cromwell had seemed unanimous for nearly two hundred years."[5] Augustus Ralli was somewhat nearer the mark though still overshooting it when he wrote in 1920, "so completely has he succeeded in resuscitating his hero's character, that the reader . . . is far from guessing its former sunk condition."[6] In 1952 Julian Symons was exaggerating by writing "at the time the view of Cromwell's conduct which Carlyle took, and triumphantly supported with factual material, was thoroughly heretical."[7] In this instance, it seems, heresy was immediately transformed to dogma. More recently (1978) Walter Waring wrote, "Through his desire to brighten Cromwell's tarnished name, Carlyle became the first of Cromwell's nineteenth century biographers to see in the Lord Protector something far greater than a ruthless warrior."[8] And in 1982 A. L. LeQuesne wrote "Carlyle to a very large extent succeeded in reversing an entire tradition of historiography" which had stood 200 years. LeQuesne did not realize there were various historiographies, not just one. He is more accurate, but still too sweeping when he adds "from this interpretation the whole subsequent tradition

of Cromwellian biography down to our own day descends,"[9] since this takes no account of the quiet labors of Firth and Gardiner. Of all Carlyle's biographers only Emery Neff (1932) gives evidence of having explored this historiography of Cromwell to even a small degree. He notes Robertson's "spirited vindication," Forster's biography and Macaulay's essay on Milton.[10]

Historians of the Civil War are more accurate. Firth set the tone in his Introduction to Lomas when he wrote that Carlyle "taught the world to see that the Protector was an honest man." Critics had substantial reservations about his interpretation, but "his estimate of Cromwell's character exerted a wide and increasing influence. It influenced all subsequent biographies and historians."[11] Carlyle sought to make the heart of the Puritan rebellion visible. The result was a triumphant success, while "the impulse which his book gave to the study of that part of seventeenth century history has not yet died away." Subsequent historians' views of Cromwell's character are "substantially that set forth by Carlyle, though they naturally differ very widely from Carlyle in their estimate of his policy."[12]

Clearly Firth has a far more accurate if also incomplete perception of the antecedents and influence of Cromwell. Why biographers should have been ignorant of this is a question. In most instances they were more interested in documenting Carlyle's life through letters or other materials which do not mention the more favorable literature on Cromwell. Attempted analysis of the book was superficial on both literary and historical grounds. Also, most of the historical analysis that does exist is founded on either on Froude's inaccuracies or Carlyle's own overblown and rhetorical

assessment of his own labors. In this instance the myth started with Carlyle himself.

From Carlyle himself we learn how great his efforts were. The books he read were dull, "dreary old records" he tells us, while the authors were stupid, imbecilic or dishonest. Let Mark Noble, whose reputation has suffered so unfairly at Carlyle's hands, suffer further by recalling what Carlyle said of him and his research:

> For Noble himself is a man of extreme imbecility; his judgment, for most part, seeming to lie dead asleep; and indeed it is worth little when broadest awake. He falls into manifold mistakes, commits and omits in all ways; plods along contented, in an element of perennial dimness, purblindness; has occasionally a helpless broad innocence of platitude which is almost interesting. A man indeed of extreme imbecility; to whom nevertheless let due gratitude be borne.[13]

This is the abuse all his sources came in for. Most of it is unfair, but the impression given is of Carlyle creating order out of chaos, Carlyle laboriously shoveling away the muck burying Cromwell, Carlyle with patient and impatient heroism reading dull books and gleaning what was useful from them. When he sought the documents of the period he found their stupidity overwhelmed the heroism of the age, but enhanced the heroism of the writer who sought to make sense of them:

> They lie there, printed, written, to the extent of tons and square miles, as shot-rubbish; unedited, unsorted, not so much as indexed; full of every conceivable confusion; -- yielding light to very few; yielding darkness, in several sorts, to very many.[14]

Rhetorical overstatement is combined with gross misstatement. The "enormous folios" of Rushworth, Whitelocke and Thurloe "have been printed . . . but never yet edited." The books are so bad that "not

one of those monstrous old volumes has so much as an available Index." This simply is not true since the books Carlyle mentions are either chronologically arranged, indexed or both. While some allowance here may be made for the fact that the "impatient friend" and not Carlyle is speaking, the same charge is repeated again, while Carlyle merely comments "this description does not want for emphasis: but . . . there is too much truth in it."[15]

In addition to overstating the difficulties of his sources Carlyle does the same regarding his efforts at collecting the letters. Remember that few came from manuscripts, while Carlyle never set foot outside London in order to copy a letter; most came from printed books. Yet Carlyle did not merely collect the letters, he "gathered them from far and near; fished them up from the foul Lethean-quagmires where they lay buried." Neither did he simply edit them, but "endeavoured to wash them clean from foreign stupidities (such a job of buckwashing as I do not long to repeat.)" Neither did he humbly labor at his task, but worked "for long years in those unspeakable Historic Provinces."[16] Carlyle goes farthest when he says of the speeches "except for one . . . I have to believe myself, not very exultingly, to be the first actual reader for nearly two centuries past."[17] Nowhere is he more absurd or arrogant than in this claim. The editions from which he took the speeches were largely nineteenth century ones: Burton's Diary (1828) and the Somers Tracts (1809-15) being two important examples. Could Carlyle truly believe the editors Walter Scott and John Rutt had not read their own book, or that none of the purchasers had? Even if we define "read" to mean "understanding," as Carlyle would, his claim is still outlandish, even as a natural outgrowth of his exalted definition of editing and his belief that he alone was inspired or

insightful enough to read and understand the speeches. It is precisely this sort of language Carlyle employs regularly. The unwary accept his excessive account of what he has done, and aid in perpetuating a great deal of misinformation, if not an actual myth.

Yet Carlyle's achievement in Cromwell was so important that it does not need exaggerating. Part of the vigor of the style comes from his rhetorical excesses. It must be remembered, however, that as far as his own research is concerned his rhetorical claims are excessive, as are biographers' claims on behalf of his historiographical achievement. It is more accurate to say that Carlyle may have influenced everyone following him, but did not change every mind he influenced.

The reason for this is due to Carlyle, Cromwell, the controversy surrounding them both and the nature of the history they are part of. In Cromwell's case the dispute has always centered more on his motives than his actions. We question, in Abbott's words, "the springs of action, the motives and machinations, the circumstances that he had faced and overcome."[18] Thus we have the unvarnished fact that on 20 April 1653 while wearing grey worsted stockings Cromwell forcibly dissolved the House of Commons. The unvarnished fact is not enough. Thoughtful people wonder why. Was Cromwell reneging on a tacit promise made to Parliament, fulfilling a well-planned nefarious desire for more power, acting out of angry frustration on the spur of the moment? We never really know, and can only exercise discretion and patience in establishing and reviewing available evidence, and caution in offering our reason. With the right combination of virtues -- patience in research, thoughtfulness in interpretation and insight in presentation -- a plausible explanation can be

advanced. The truest history we will ever get is the unvarnished fact. The moment we ask "Why?" and try to answer, the Pandora's box of noisy interpretations has been opened. "Cromwell was a traitor," cries the unreconstructed republican. "No, he was a proto-democrat" asserts the late nineteenth century liberal confidently. "Wrong, blindly wrong," we imagine Carlyle thundering, "he was a god-intoxicated man fulfilling his destiny!" Indeed, the thunder of interpretations continues to reverberate today, 330 years after the lightning-stroke of the act itself. As it is with one incident, so it is with a lifetime devoted to bold, forceful actions. Combine Cromwell's bold life with the bold opinions and style of his biographer and the resulting interpretation is awe-inspiring, as well as impossible to accept.

It was impossible in 1845 for Carlyle to convince everyone of his views on Cromwell, however convinced he was of them. The figure was too controversial, the interpretation too idiosyncratic and readers then and today too influenced by other issues ignored or unknown to Carlyle. The settling of the question of Cromwell's motivations is simply impossible on Carlyle's or anyone's terms.

All studies of Cromwell reduce themselves to an opinion. Somehow, one must come to terms with Carlyle's opinion: accept, reject, ignore or modify it, these are the options. Since much of his book is unreliable as history and inaccurately edited one might question the validity of its conclusions. That Carlyle would have found little reason to change his mind does not help those who are more scrupulous. In any event, his opinions were not based as much on his research as they were on his insight, and after all, his inaccuracies reflect hurried carelessness rather than calculated deceit,

and do not affect the representation of Cromwell. In a sense the mistakes don't matter since the insight is there. In this respect the issue of factual accuracy begs the question of the book's opinions which, all based on insight, are derived from Carlyle's mature beliefs on politics, government and religion. In another respect begging the question is our way of answering it in the negative since those beliefs in insight combined with, yet above research, the divine universe, and the God-inspired hero bringing order out of chaos, are certainly more than most people can accept. Even granting these difficult premises there is no assurance the editor-historian has been inspired enough -- or careful enough -- to be right. Opinions are still opinions, no matter how pleasing or highly placed their justification.

Still, if Cromwell is not satisfactorily revealed in this book, to a great extent his editor is. All his ideas are there. Students of Carlyle have much to gain from it while historiographically there has been no more important work on Cromwell. And there is more. For whether we reject them or not Carlyle's opinions are expressed with passionate artistry and consummate skill. The book is a work of art, rich in imagery, written in a hortatory, Hebraic style, with a dialect similar to that of its subject. Through his use of shifting voices and tenses Carlyle forces the reader to witness the events described, whether it be Cromwell speaking to his Parliaments, fighting in the field or on his deathbed. Friedrich Althaus, Carlyle's perceptive contemporary biographer, wrote that the language of Cromwell "seems in secret harmony with its venerable subject. We come to believe we are hearing the speech of the age itself and feel as if the Puritan Zeitgeist itself were telling its history. There is

no higher level for historical writing to achieve, and seldom does it succeed to such an extent."[19] Almost every sentence serves to reinforce the message of the book. Cromwell was a sincere, pious hero who sought to do God's will and after his fashion succeeded. After his fashion Carlyle succeeds in telling this story.

In closing, a final attempt must be made to estimate the worth of a book one has studied intensively and almost exclusively for several years. In the forced march of thesis research one must finally break ranks to gain necessary perspective. Eventually one remembers that not only did Carlyle write other books, but so did other people. Some of them are even important. Although study has brought some expertise, lack of perspective makes it too easy to misstate the case. In part then the conclusions of others who have looked at all Carlyle's work or much of the literature on Cromwell should be consulted. Few have troubled, but their views are worth knowing.

On the negative side there is faithful Edward FitzGerald. Before Cromwell appeared he told Carlyle "the more I read of Cromwell the more I was forced to agree with the verdict of the world about him." Carlyle answered with a grunt and a "prodigious blast of tobacco smoke."[20] The book did not change his mind and seemingly left him thoroughly unimpressed. Though he wrote to Carlyle (22(?) Jan. 1846) "I am content to take your Hero, whole and without flaw"[21] he later wrote in a different vein to W. B. Donne (8(?) June 1846): "Have you read his Cromwell?" he asked, then answered for himself:

> I believe I remain pretty much where I was. I think Milton, who is the best evidence Cromwell has in his favour, warns him somewhat prophetically at the end of his Second Defence against taking on him Kingship, etc.,

> and in the tract on the State of England in 1660 . . . he says nothing at all of Cromwell, no panegyric; but glances at the evil ambitious men in the Army have done; and, now that all is open to choose, prays for a pure Republic! So I herd with the flunkies and lackies, . . .[22]

More recently Philip Rosenberg curtly dismissed the achievement of Cromwell and indeed of the whole of Carlyle's career after 1843 by referring to his "pathetically diminishing creative powers." Cromwell itself "scarcely measures up to the standards set in" his earlier work, and is a "dreary bulk."[23]

Fred Kaplan, Carlyle's latest biographer, seems to agree that the book was an artistic failure. Carlyle "permitted himself to hope" it "might" be his most influential work, yet "he recognized that at some important level it had resulted from a failure for which he could not forgive himself." And again, though Carlyle "managed to persuade himself" Cromwell "was a fine accomplishment" "he knew . . . that it was at best a poor substitute for the biography he had failed to write."[24] Thus from its own to the present day many have considered the book an historic and artistic failure.

Here restated is the old view that there is little to be said about Carlyle's histories. Yet such an attitude has more to do with the prejudices and limitations of these critics than a considered analysis or careful reading of Cromwell would show. Rejecting it as history or disagreeing with its interpretation is one thing, but disregarding its importance as history or beauty as art is quite another. Rosenberg and Kaplan are singularly unconvincing in their rejection of Cromwell, especially when compared to those who have praised it.

Friedrich Althaus, when trying to rank the French Revolution and Cromwell, found it "difficult," then decided that "if the goal of

historical writing is to show the unity of idea and reality, of form and spirit, we might be tempted to declare this history of Cromwell the most perfect of Carlyle's historical works, since in it he presented not only historical reality but also a reality in harmony with his own ideals."[25] Carlyle animated his own beliefs and made the past live.

Among historians Wilbur Abbott, with his lifetime of publications on Cromwell, including the monumental edition of writings and speeches that finally superseded Carlyle's work as history, is of all people the man best qualified to judge his predecessor. He was well aware of the limitations of Carlyle's work, yet he praises rather than criticizes and saw in its limitations the seeds of its greatness. Cromwell "was, and it remains, the greatest literary monument to the Protector's memory."[26] Abbott bemoans having to follow such a "classic" work, then cites three advantages Carlyle had over his successors. His style was "extraordinarily arresting," he had the utmost confidence in the "infallible righteousness" of his subject and himself, and his material was limited and did not overwhelm the subject. While the last two reasons may be veiled criticisms Abbott appreciates the artistry of the work and admires the faith and boldness of the interpretation. He concludes that "It is not probable his glorification of the great Puritan will ever find a rival, or that his portrait of Cromwell will ever be displaced or even greatly modified in public opinion."[27] From a man who knows what he is talking about this is no faint praise. What of Carlyle himself?

His thoughts on Cromwell are instructive and return us appropriately enough to the didactic purpose of his writing. Why print the letters

and speeches? Because, answered Carlyle, with the usual Biblical overtone, they were "profitable for reproof, for encouragement, for building-up in manful purposes and works."[28] In a word, they were instructive. Initially Carlyle expected little from Cromwell. Its popularity surprised and even annoyed him slightly since he had to begin revising the book within a month of its appearance. As he progressed he wrote a reflective letter to FitzGerald (18 April 1846) to which we have referred. He now hoped Cromwell would put men off their "thrice accursed notion" "that every clever man . . . must be a bit of a liar." If the book did that it would be a greater accomplishment "than anything I ever tried . . . in the 'literary' way." Perhaps sensing the effect the book was already having, with reviews being inclined to accept his view of Cromwell's sincerity he added "These Letters will probably survive all my other Books."[29] To Espinasse Carlyle expressed similar sentiments while there is the revealing admission that Cromwell "was the only work of his of which one heard him say, or rather hint, that its execution did not fall far short of his ideal."[30] In his old age Carlyle exalted Cromwell above all his other works. "He often said," Allingham recorded in his diary in 1874, "The only book of mine I care at all about is the Cromwell.'"[31]

This may seem strange to us today since Sartor is Carlyle's richest book, and along with Past and Present, On Heroes and the early essays the most widely read. Of the histories those who bother will usually read the French Revolution and leave the other bulky volumes to gather dust on the bookshelves. It is fair enough if the conclusions of scholars differ from Carlyle's, since writers are not necessarily the best judges of their work. Yet Carlyle

preferred Cromwell to his more "literary" works for a simple reason: it offered more instruction to receptive readers than anything else he wrote. This is how he judged his work. Carlyle worshipped the simplicity of Cromwell's faith, the purity of his motives and the vigor of his actions. He never found a man more representative of his own beliefs. Never was there a more practical hero. There was none in the French Revolution, Frederick proved deficient, while even heroic Abbot Samson was so ancient as to be almost unrecoverable. Cromwell had none of these shortcomings. The greater the hero, the more instructive his life, the better the book. It was as simple as that.

To us it is not quite so simple since the book's merit today rests more on its artistry than any other factor. Merely because Carlyle wished it people will not begin reading, let alone emulating his version, or indeed his vision of Cromwell. The message was not heeded in his own day, except selectively. More cannot be hoped or perhaps even wished for it today. Nonetheless, this book over which he struggled so many years, threatened to abandon regularly, wrote and re-wrote, revised and re-revised is important historiographically, a success artistically, and an essential expression of Carlyle's thought. The student of Cromwell could do worse in studying Carlyle; the student of Carlyle could scarcely do better than to study Cromwell.